United Nations S/2018/1171

Security Council

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Letter dated 18 December 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of France, Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

France, Germany and the United Kingdom wish to bring to the attention of the Security Council recent actions undertaken by Iran which are inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

As the Security Council is aware, in paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015),

> Iran is called upon not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technology, until the date eight years after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action adoption day or until the date on which the International Atomic Energy Agency submits a report confirming the Broader Conclusion, whichever is earlier.

The phrase "ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons" in paragraph 3 includes Missile Technology Control Regime category I systems. By definition, Missile Technology Control Regime category I systems, which are those capable of delivering at least a 500-kilogram payload to a range of at least 300 kilometres, are inherently capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

On 1 December, Iran test-fired a medium-range ballistic missile which falls under Missile Technology Control Regime category I. Test-firing such a missile clearly constitutes "activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons" and "launches using such ballistic missile technology", which Iran is called upon not to undertake in paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015).

We assess that Iran's programme to develop ballistic missiles continues to be inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015). This ballistic missile activity is also destabilizing and increases regional tensions

We trust that this information will assist the Security Council in promoting the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) by all States. In light of the requests made of the Secretary-General in resolution 2231 (2015), we therefore respectfully request

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that the Secretary-General report fully and thoroughly Iran's ballistic missile activity inconsistent with resolution 2231 (2015) in his next report.

(*Signed*) Karen **Pierce**
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom

(*Signed*) François **Delattre**
Permanent Representative of France

(*Signed*) Christoph **Heusgen**
Permanent Representative of Germany

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Letter dated 27 December 2018 from the Chair of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals on the Working Group's activities in 2018.

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Gustavo **Meza-Cuadra**
Chair
Informal Working Group on International Tribunals

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Report of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals for 2018

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to inform the Security Council of the work of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals in 2018.

II. Organizational matters

2. The Working Group was established on an informal basis in 2000 to consider matters relating to the United Nations and United Nations-assisted tribunals, in particular the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and, in recent years, the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. The Working Group consists of the legal advisers of the permanent missions of the members of the Security Council and is assisted by the Office of the Legal Counsel of the Office of Legal Affairs and the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs.

3. Until 2007, the Working Group's chairmanship followed the monthly rotation of the presidency of the Security Council and it met only on an ad hoc basis. At the end of 2007, given the intensive work relating to residual issues and the completion strategies of the Tribunals pursuant to resolutions 1503 (2003) and 1534 (2004), the Working Group decided to appoint a single Chair and began meeting regularly. Subsequently, the Working Group was chaired by Belgium (2008), Austria (2009 and 2010), Portugal (2011), Guatemala (2012 and 2013), Chile (2014 and 2015) and Uruguay (2016 and 2017). Peru has had the honour of chairing the Working Group in 2018.

4. In 2018, the Working Group held two formal meetings with the President and the Prosecutor of the Mechanism.

III. Briefings to the Security Council

5. Following previous practice, the Permanent Representative of Peru, in his capacity as Chair of the Working Group, briefed the Security Council on the activities of the Working Group and gave his personal reflections on 6 June (8278th meeting) and 11 December 2018 (8416th meeting).

IV. Exchange of views with the President and the Prosecutor of the Residual Mechanism

6. At its meeting on 4 June 2018, the Working Group held an exchange of views with the President and the Prosecutor of the Mechanism, in preparation for their briefings to the Security Council on the work and activities of the Mechanism on 6 June 2018.

7. At its meeting on 10 December 2018, the Working Group held an exchange of views with the President and the Prosecutor of the Mechanism, in preparation for their briefings to the Security Council on the work and activities of the Mechanism on 11 December 2018.

V. Review report on the progress of the work of the Residual Mechanism

8. On 8 March 2018, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) issued a report pursuant to resolution 2256 (2015) on the evaluation of the methods and work of the Mechanism, covering the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2017 (S/2018/206).

9. At its 8208th meeting, on 19 March 2018, the Security Council adopted a statement by the President (S/PRST/2018/6) which, inter alia, requested the Mechanism to present by 15 April 2018 its report on the progress of its work since the last review of the Mechanism in December 2015. By the same statement, the Council also requested the Working Group to carry out, by 15 May 2018, a thorough examination of the Mechanism's report, as well as the OIOS report on the evaluation of the methods and work of the Mechanism, and to present its views and any findings or recommendations for the Council's consideration in its review of the work of the Mechanism, including in completing its functions with efficiency and effective management.

10. By a letter dated 13 April 2018 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/347), the President of the Mechanism transmitted the review report pursuant to the statement by the President of 19 March 2018.

11. By its resolution 2422 (2018) of 27 June 2018, the Security Council, inter alia, noted the conclusion of its review of the progress of the work of the Mechanism.

VI. Appointments of the President and Prosecutor and Judges of the Mechanism

12. By a letter dated 22 June 2018 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/626), the Secretary-General, inter alia, conveyed his intention to reappoint 23 judges of the Mechanism for a term of two years from 1 July 2018 until 30 June 2020. By the same letter, the Secretary-General conveyed his intention to reappoint Judge Theodor Meron as President of the Mechanism for a term of office from 1 July 2018 until 18 January 2019 and to appoint Judge Carmel Agius as President with effect from 19 January 2019 until 30 June 2020, and nominated Serge Brammertz as Prosecutor of the Mechanism for a new two-year term, from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020.

13. By a letter dated 26 June 2018 addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/627), the President of the Security Council stated that members of the Council had taken note of the intentions and nomination as expressed in the letter of the Secretary-General.

14. By its resolution 2422 (2018) of 27 June 2018, the Security Council decided to appoint Mr. Brammertz as Prosecutor of the Mechanism with effect from 1 July 2018 until 30 June 2020.

15. By a letter dated 29 June 2018 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/652), the Secretary-General referred to the letter dated 26 June 2018 from the President of the Council (S/2018/627) and stated that he had received a corresponding letter from the President of the General Assembly and that he would proceed with the reappointment of 23 judges of the Mechanism, as well as the reappointment of Judge Meron and the appointment of Judge Agius as President of the Mechanism for their respective terms.

16. By a letter dated 2 August 2018 addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/756), the President of the Security Council, inter alia, noted that the roster of judges of the Mechanism had less than the full complement of 25 judges provided for under article 8, paragraph 1, of its statute; that the members of the Council, having carefully analysed the current situation in the Mechanism, reasonably expected that filling the two vacant positions would assist in the effective and timely implementation of the Mechanism's mandate in accordance with resolution 1966 (2010); and that the members of the Council had decided that two judges should be elected, in accordance with article 10 of the statute of the Mechanism, to the roster of judges of the Mechanism. The President requested the Secretary-General to invite States to submit nominations within a period of 60 days.

17. By a letter dated 25 October 2018 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/963), the Secretary-General forwarded to the Council the eight nominations that had been received within the designated period for submission. On 1 November 2018, the Legal Counsel wrote to the President of the Council informing him of one nomination that had been received after the deadline. On 13 November 2018, the Assistant Secretary-General for Legal Affairs wrote to the President of the Council informing him of two additional nominations that had been received after the deadline.

18. By a letter dated 16 November 2018 addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/73/578), the President of the Security Council forwarded a list of 11 nominations to the Assembly.

VII. Conclusion

19. In 2018, Peru was honoured to assume the chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals, which allowed it to reaffirm its commitment to multilateralism and international law, as well as to the work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, which inherited a number of essential functions from the recently closed International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

20. Aside from the meetings referred to in the present report, the Working Group also held informal meetings in March, April, May, June, July and November 2018 to consider different issues.

21. The Chair recognizes the important role of the Working Group and thanks each of its members for their commitment and constructive participation throughout 2018 and for their efforts in supporting and reviewing the work of the Mechanism.

22. The Chair would like this constructive approach to continue in 2019 in order to proceed with the consideration of any additional issue that may arise.

23. The Chair emphasizes his commitment to supporting the work of the Mechanism and giving priority to the dialogue with the Mechanism, as well as with States concerned and the Secretariat, for the most expeditious completion of the Mechanism's mandate.

24. To conclude, the Chair extends his appreciation to the Office of Legal Affairs and the Security Council Affairs Division for their invaluable support during 2018. The Chair would also like to thank the President, Theodor Meron, and the Prosecutor for their commitment to working closely together in furtherance of the mandates established by the Council. The Chair values the excellent relationship built with all of them during 2018.

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Status of implementation of Security Council resolution 2451 (2018)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. On 21 December 2018, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2451 (2018), in which it endorsed the agreements reached by the Government of Yemen and the Houthis on the city and governorate of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa; an executive mechanism on activating the prisoner exchange agreement; and a statement of understanding on Ta'izz.

2. The agreement on the city of Hudaydah and ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa includes an immediate ceasefire covering Hudaydah governorate and the mutual redeployment of forces from the city and the three ports to agreed locations outside the city and the ports within 21 days of the ceasefire entering into force; a commitment not to bring any military reinforcements into the city, the three ports and the governorate; and a commitment to remove any military manifestations from the city.

3. In line with the request of the parties, the Security Council, in resolution 2451 (2018), also authorized the Secretary-General to establish and deploy, for an initial period of 30 days from the date of adoption of the resolution, an advance team to monitor, support and facilitate the immediate implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. It also mandated the United Nations to chair the Redeployment Coordination Committee, charged with overseeing the ceasefire and the redeployment of forces.

4. The present note is submitted pursuant to paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 2451 (2018), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on progress regarding implementation of the resolution, including any breaches of commitments by the parties, on a weekly basis, as called for by the parties, until further notice. The present report covers the period from 21 to 28 December 2018.

II. Deployment of advance team

5. The Secretariat has established an inter-agency planning group to provide rapid support for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. The group is chaired by the Department of Political Affairs and composed of relevant United Nations entities

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from across the Organization. The group has met regularly to make available the package of support necessary for the implementation of the Agreement on the ground.

6. The Secretary-General appointed retired Major-General Patrick Cammaert of the Netherlands as the Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, as stipulated in the agreement on the city of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa.

7. At the request of the Special Envoy for Yemen, the two parties to the Agreement appointed three representatives each to the Redeployment Coordination Committee. On 22 December, the Committee Chair arrived in Yemen with an advance team and immediately began consultations with the parties. Mr. Cammaert met with the Government of Yemen Committee members in Aden on that day. On 23 December, he met with the Houthi members of the Committee in Sana'a. Mr. Cammaert and the advance team used these initial meetings with the parties to recall the obligations set by the Stockholm Agreement and the objective of the Committee, namely to ensure adherence to the ceasefire, alleviate the humanitarian situation and redeploy forces. Both parties welcomed United Nations support and facilitation for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and pledged full cooperation with the Committee Chair and with the United Nations more broadly.

8. On 23 December, Mr. Cammaert and the advance team, currently composed of 16 international monitors, arrived in Hudaydah city, where they are now installed and are assessing and defining the scope of United Nations support for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. On 24 December, the advance team met with the authorities in Hudaydah, visited its port and familiarized themselves with the operating environment within the city, including the blocked eastern and southern routes into and out of the city.

9. In parallel, the Committee Chair has engaged in a sustained manner with both parties, in person and via telephone, to build trust and confidence and to push for the convening of the first joint meeting of the Committee in Hudaydah, or its immediate vicinity, as soon as possible. Following intense consultations with the parties to identify a suitable and secure location, both parties made commitments to ensure the safety and security of the Committee members and United Nations advance team and the coordinated clearance of mines for the travel of Government of Yemen representatives to the appointed venue. The first joint meeting of the Committee took place on 26 and 27 December in Hudaydah city.

10. The Committee Chair set the tone for the meeting by urging the parties to leave the past behind and look towards the future. After positive discussions on draft terms of reference for the Committee and its operations, the parties discussed immediate confidence-building measures that could be put in place to sustain momentum and goodwill. In this vein, the Chair tasked the Committee representatives with presenting creative options regarding how to reopen the main transport routes to facilitate humanitarian access and civilian movements into and out of Hudaydah city. Following constructive discussions, the parties agreed to reopen the Hudaydah-Sana'a road to create a humanitarian corridor. They have also, in principle, agreed to a phased reopening of several other blocked routes. The first convoy with humanitarian aid is slated to leave Hudaydah port on 29 December at 10 a.m.

III. Situation in the city of Hudaydah and the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa

A. Monitoring of the ceasefire in Hudaydah

11. Once fully operationalized, the Committee will oversee the implementation of the ceasefire. It will also work to prevent a recurrence of clashes and initiate necessary de-escalation measures, where required.

12. Meanwhile, since the ceasefire entered into force on 18 December 2018, there has been a gradual decrease in hostilities and the fragile truce has held, although sporadic shooting continues. Both parties continue to make allegations against the other of provoking hostilities, as well as redeploying and reinforcing their respective forces. Both parties have used media outlets to transmit accusations regarding ceasefire violations. Notwithstanding the media claims and incidents on the ground, the assessment of the United Nations is that both sides have largely adhered to the ceasefire.

B. Redeployment of forces

13. A two-phased redeployment of forces is envisioned to enable immediate critical access to humanitarian facilities. The Committee is in the process of discussing the topic of redeployment, which will include time frames, locations and units for redeployment and modalities for verification and monitoring, as set forth in the Stockholm Agreement.

C. Strengthened United Nations presence

14. The proposal of the World Food Programme (WFP) regarding the management of the ports is pending agreement of the relevant Yemeni authorities. As part of that proposal, WFP intends to deploy United Nations port management experts to the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa in order to support the Yemen Red Sea Ports Corporation. The proposal also envisages the deployment of a Chief Executive Officer, who will oversee all port management-related matters and will decide on operational matters in consultation with the Chair of the Yemen Red Sea Ports Corporation, as appropriate.

15. Following the adoption of resolution 2451 (2018), the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen is enhancing operations to monitor inspections of commercial cargo at the ports of Hudaydah, Salif and Ra's Isa. In the immediate term, the Mechanism will deploy staff and monitors to the three ports, while in the longer term, the Mechanism will increase the inspection capacity at the ports with mobile and hull scanners. Until the deployment of personnel and equipment to the ports, the Mechanism will continue to monitor inspections in Djibouti and other regional ports.

16. Pending agreement by the parties, the United Nations will deploy accountancy experts to work with customs at the ports and with the Yemen Red Sea Ports Corporation to ensure that all revenues, including customs revenues and port fees, are properly accounted for and deposited in the Hudaydah branch of the Central Bank of Yemen or other accounts, as agreed to by the parties. The parties have not yet reached agreement on the operationalization of the financial arrangements and remain in disagreement on a number of related issues, including on the role of the United Nations. The United Nations Development Programme remains prepared to support,

if so requested, the channelling of revenues from the ports to the Central Bank in support of the Agreement.

IV. Humanitarian situation and access

17. Since the adoption of resolution 2451 (2018), the overall humanitarian situation has not changed. The front line that crosses the main Hudaydah-Sana'a road prevents access to five United Nations warehouses and the Red Sea Mills, where there is enough wheat to feed 3.5 million people for a month. While the Hudaydah-Hajjah road – the only route into and out of Hudaydah city – remains open, other main arteries remain closed, including the coastal road, the airport road, route 60 and the Hudaydah-Taiz road.

18. The Aden container terminal remains congested, which is a challenge to humanitarian operations. A humanitarian organization has had around 1,000 containers in the Aden container terminal for several months and has incurred $2 million in port storage and container demurrage fees.

19. Bureaucratic impediments to humanitarian access have remained since the adoption of resolution 2451 (2018), including entry permits for 18 United Nations personnel pending approval with the Houthis.

20. Hudaydah and Salif ports remain open and operational. Ra's Isa port remains closed, as has been the case since June 2017. Bureaucratic impediments to fuel imports remain, despite the lifting of restrictions on food imports. On 23 December 2018, one commercial vessel carrying fuel was denied entry to Hudaydah port owing to regulations associated with Government of Yemen Decree 75 of 2018, despite having been inspected on 23 December and issued a clearance certificate by the Mechanism.

21. Since the adoption of resolution 2451 (2018), the Mechanism has monitored three inspections in the territorial waters of Djibouti: one on 23 December 2018 and two on 26 December 2018. All have been issued Mechanism clearance certificates. Separately, two vessels, one containing fuel and one food, offloaded at Hudaydah port, and one food vessel offloaded at Salif port. As at 26 December 2018, there were five vessels at Hudaydah and one at Salif offloading cargo.

22. Despite the increase in the value of the Yemeni rial over the past two months, purchasing power remains low and prices of key commodities, including food, fuel and medicine, remain high. The national income of Yemen is half of what it was prior to March 2015. Since 21 December 2018, the exchange rate of the Yemeni rial has risen slightly from 500 to 525 Yemeni rials per United States dollar.

V. Prisoner exchange

23. To implement the prisoner exchange agreement, a supervisory committee was agreed upon in Sweden and is composed of the parties, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the International Committee of the Red Cross. On 22 December, the supervisory committee held separate meetings with the two parties: one in Sana'a and the other via telephone. The prisoner exchange agreement stipulates the simultaneous release and exchange of detainees following specific steps to be taken by the parties. On 25 December, both parties submitted to the Office of the Special Envoy their preliminary responses regarding the lists each party had received from its counterpart through the Office of the Special Envoy in Stockholm.

VI. Situation in Ta'izz

24. During the reporting period, both parties submitted to the Office of the Special Envoy their respective lists of members for the joint committee, as set forth in the statement of understanding on Ta'izz. The Office of the Special Envoy plans to convene the first joint meeting of the joint committee in an agreed-upon location in early January 2019.

VII. Observations

25. The willingness of the parties to adhere to their commitments and cooperate with the United Nations are key to the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. The parties have thus far been generally cooperative with the United Nations and have facilitated the deployment of Mr. Cammaert and the advance team. Both parties have also demonstrated goodwill to ensure the start-up of the Committee, including by undertaking demining activities and providing security guarantees to facilitate the travel of the representatives of the Government of Yemen, along with the Committee Chair and the advance team, to take part in the first meeting of the joint committee in Hudaydah.

26. I urge the parties to continue in this spirit of cooperation. The timely issuance of visas and other administrative approvals for required equipment are critical for the additional deployment of United Nations personnel to support the full implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. This will, in turn, create a positive atmosphere conducive to the next steps facilitated by the United Nations aimed at ending the conflict. I also urge the parties to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and assets at all times.

27. The support of the Security Council remains critical to the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and the ongoing efforts of my Special Envoy to continue the political process that was launched in Sweden. A negotiated political settlement remains the only path towards an end to the conflict in Yemen. I call on all Member States to fully support the role of the United Nations, including the efforts led by Mr. Cammaert on the ground in Hudaydah. The dire humanitarian situation in Yemen and the devastating toll of the conflict on civilians demand nothing less from us.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2423 (2018), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2019 and requested me to report every three months on its implementation, focusing on progress in taking forward the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (see S/2015/364 and S/2015/364/Add.1) and the efforts of MINUSMA to support it. The present report contains updates regarding major developments in Mali since my previous report (S/2018/866).

II. Major political developments

2. Steps were taken by the signatory parties in the implementation of the peace agreement, including the launch of an accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process, and the establishment of 10 district-level interim administrations in the Kidal, Ménaka and Timbuktu regions, including two in Taoudenni. No further progress took place, however, on the operationalization of the interim authorities and on agreement on integration quotas for the land forces. The Pact for Peace signed on 15 October between the Government of Mali and the United Nations committed the Malian parties to pursue and accelerate a more inclusive peace process. With a view to fostering a conducive environment for political and institutional reforms, Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga started consultations with political and societal actors, including the signatory armed movements.

A. Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali

3. The Agreement Monitoring Committee held three regular meetings during the period under review to take stock of progress in the implementation of the Agreement. During the meeting held on 18 September, participants welcomed the appointment of a Minister for Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation, Lassine Bouaré, whose Ministry was established to coordinate the Government's efforts to implement the Agreement.

4. During the meeting held on 15 October, Lassine Bouaré announced the establishment of a strategic forum and four national technical subcommittees

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mirroring the subcommittees of the Agreement Monitoring Committee tasked with the implementation of the Agreement. The Committee will continue to monitor progress in implementation and resolve differences between the parties. At its meeting on 12 November, the Agreement Monitoring Committee endorsed the establishment of a working group on the participation of women in the peace process, under the leadership of MINUSMA.

5. The Pact for Peace, which reaffirms the Government's commitment to the full implementation of the Agreement, was signed in the same meeting by Minister Bouaré and my Special Representative for Mali. The Pact calls for more inclusivity in the peace process and reiterates that the armed groups should gradually disappear to give way to a reconstituted and reformed army. It also provides for international mediation efforts to make binding decisions in case of divergences between the parties, in conformity with article 52 of the Agreement. The signatory armed groups stated their full adherence to the Pact through an annex signed on the same day and agreed to launch the accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process of the Operational Coordination Mechanism elements in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu on 6 November.

6. During the same meeting, the representative of the independent observer presented the outline of its second report, covering the period from May to September, which was issued on 29 October. It focuses on progress and challenges impacting the implementation of the 22 March roadmap, including the situation in central Mali and criminal economic activities.

7. During its meeting on 21 November, the Agreement Monitoring Committee took note of the limited progress achieved in the implementation of the peace agreement, finding that despite the start of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process, there was no progress on the operationalization of the interim authorities. The signatory movements, in particular the Platform coalition of armed groups, expressed concern about the Government's initiative to carry out an administrative and territorial restructuring and indicated that they may boycott the process.

Political and institutional measures

8. In the period under review, the percentage of civil administrators present at their duty stations in northern and central Mali slightly increased compared to the previous reporting period, from 31 to 34 per cent. The governors of Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal and Ménaka were present in their respective localities, while the governor of Taoudenni continued to operate from Timbuktu because the necessary infrastructure, notably office accommodation and residential facility, were not yet in place. Out of the 72 civil administrators appointed in June, seven administrators including three prefects and four sub-prefects were deployed to their duty stations in Kidal and Gao. Since my previous report, there was a slight increase in the percentage of appointed judicial and prison officials deployed in northern and central Mali, although insecurity continued to cause absenteeism and the relocation of some staff.

9. Ten district-level interim administrations were installed in the regions of Timbuktu, Ménaka and Kidal, while two district-level interim administrations for Taoudenni were deployed to Timbuktu. The Government allocated an additional $6 million to enable regional-level interim authorities to fund projects identified in their priority action plans, including the completion of a water supply system in Kidal city, the construction of six schools and six water points in the Ménaka region, and the establishment of three camel meat and milk processing factories in the Taoudenni region.

10. Discussions on the territorial and administrative restructuring reform dominated the national political debate throughout the reporting period. On 13 October, a document presented as a draft law on administrative and territorial restructuring was circulated on social media, sparking a tense debate among political actors and civil society groups and some demonstrations in the northern and central regions. There were concerns that certain communities could be disadvantaged on the basis of ethnic and geographical lines. The document aimed to increase the number of regions from 11 to 21; the number of districts from 49 to 101 and the number of municipalities from 703 to 789. To alleviate concerns and consult populations, including segments of civil society and signatory movements, the Government held regional consultations on the country's administrative and territorial boundaries and status from 13 to 17 November throughout the country, including in Timbuktu, Ménaka, Kidal and Mopti. Such consultations could not take place in Gao due to strong opposition by civil society and signatory armed groups, who claimed that the proposed restructuring would be detrimental to some segments of the sedentary population of the Gao region and that the consultations lacked inclusivity.

Defence and security measures

11. On 6 November, the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the Commission on Integration, supported by MINUSMA, launched an ad hoc accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process for combatants of the Operational Coordination Mechanism. The process was conducted simultaneously in Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal and targeted 1,600 combatants, out of which a total of 1,423 combatants of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, the Platform coalition of armed groups and other armed groups were registered. The process, which took place from 6 to 30 November, allowed the integration of combatants of the signatory movements into the national army. The three newly constituted mixed units will be administered by the Malian army and tasked with providing security for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, under the command and control of the Technical Commission on Security. In parallel, some personnel will be selected from these units to create special units to fight terrorism. MINUSMA continued to work with all stakeholders to help them reach an agreement to move forward the integration of armed group elements in the Malian armed forces.

B. Other political developments

12. An agreement was reached to postpone the holding of legislative elections, initially scheduled to take place in the last quarter of 2018. On 12 October, the Constitutional Court ruled that the term of members of Parliament could be extended, provided an organic law be adopted to that end. On 24 October, the Council of Ministers approved a bill extending the term of members of Parliament until 30 June 2019, which was then adopted by the National Assembly on 22 November. The Council of Ministers also approved a draft decree repealing the dates of the legislative elections. Parliament adopted a bill extending the state of emergency, which has been in place since 20 November 2015, until 31 October 2019.

13. Although most stakeholders, including opposition leader Soumaïla Cissé, were in favour of a postponement of the legislative elections, they denounced what they described as the Government's unilateral approach to crucial political issues. They also demanded to be included in further decision-making processes on political reforms. My Special Representative continued to use his good offices and met with Malian stakeholders, including President Keita, the Prime Minister and opposition leader Soumaïla Cissé, to appease tensions and advocate for a constructive political

dialogue, in consultation with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States.

14. Preparations began on holding legislative elections. MINUSMA provided technical, logistical and advisory support to the Government for the annual update of the voters' registry, including through the deployment of materials and staff to the northern regions and Mopti and through support to strategic communications and awareness-raising activities.

15. Members of the political opposition, including Soumaïla Cissé, established a new political coalition, the Front pour la sauvegarde de la démocratie, which includes some 30 political parties, former presidential candidates and leaders of trade unions, and aims, inter alia, to improve electoral transparency, enhance inclusive governance systems and protect the freedom of the press.

16. On 5 November, magistrates' unions ended a three-month strike over wages and security conditions in the exercise of their duties. This followed an agreement with the Government to deploy an additional 310 security personnel to various jurisdictions and to address concerns related to the salaries of all civil servants as part of a consultation forum to be held in Bamako in mid-January 2019. The Prime Minister also proposed a framework law be developed to address the working conditions of magistrates. MINUSMA continued to support improved security for the justice system, including via a project through the trust fund for peace and security in Mali for the installation of security systems at the court and magistrates' accommodations in the Timbuktu region.

C. Support to Malian defence and security forces

17. Within the framework of the memorandum of understanding between MINUSMA and the Government related to the mutual support between MINUSMA and the Malian armed forces, the Mission provided support for three casualty and medical evacuations, shared information and coordinated patrols.

18. MINUSMA, jointly with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the European Union capacity-building mission in Mali, continued to provide technical assistance to the Malian specialized judicial unit tasked with anti-terrorism and transnational organized crime. The Mission provided logistical and liaison support to the unit for its investigation on attacks against MINUSMA, including in Douentza on 28 February, in Timbuktu on 14 April and in Ber on 27 October 2018. Further, while co-location and mentoring sessions for the Malian specialized investigations brigade continued, mentoring was extended to magistrates for the first time and support was provided to the investigation of 26 criminal cases, including the collection and examination of evidence. Training courses for the Malian specialized judicial unit were also held on terrorism investigations, judicial cooperation and human trafficking. In addition, MINUSMA provided technical assistance to the gendarmerie research brigade in Sévaré and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in preparation for the exhumation of an alleged terrorist in Boulikessi, in the centre of Mali. From 16 to 17 October, MINUSMA, in collaboration with the Government and a local non-governmental organization, trained 50 civil society representatives, including 25 women, in Bamako on the national policy on countering and preventing violent extremism and terrorism in Mali. These initiatives will contribute to strengthening the capacity of Malian justice authorities to investigate and prosecute individuals suspected of terrorism-related crimes, mass atrocities and transnational organized crime, which threaten to destabilize the peace process.

19. The Mission continued capacity-building activities for Malian defence and security forces. MINUSMA trained 1,067 members of the Malian security forces,

including 115 women, from Bamako, Gao and Timbuktu on various policing modules and on human rights, and 153 Malian national police, including 14 women, as well as 32 civilians, including 12 women, in Bamako, Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions on community policing skills. It provided 20 motorcycles to Malian police for a community policing pilot programme in Bamako, to be expanded to other regions in the country. Furthermore, two seminars on community-oriented policing for civil society were held in Bamako. Through inclusive security-planning processes, community policing seeks to reinforce trust between State authorities and the population in conflict-affected areas. In support of the national border policy, on 5 October, the Mission provided the Malian army and forest guard brigades with training and equipment, including ultra-light motorized aerial surveillance aircraft, as part of a community security and counter-poaching project in the Mopti region funded by the trust fund for peace and security in Mali.

D. Regional developments

20. Regional actors continued to support solutions to address the root causes of instability and insecurity in the Sahel, including the Group of Five for the Sahel. On 26 September, at the margins of the general debate of the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, the United Nations hosted a high-level event on Mali and the Sahel, co-chaired by the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Group of Five for the Sahel, the European Union, France and Algeria. At the event, regional and international stakeholders recalled the importance of accelerating the implementation of the Agreement to restore stability in Mali and the Sahel and of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. The Group of Five for the Sahel member States reiterated their commitment to operationalizing the Joint Force as swiftly as possible following the 29 June attack on its headquarters in Sévaré. They stressed that the lack of predictable financing and shortfalls continued to cause delays. Representatives of donor countries reiterated their support to the Joint Force and urged Group of Five for the Sahel member States to accelerate force generation efforts.

21. On 25 October, the Defence and Security Committee of the Group of Five for the Sahel convened its eighth extraordinary session in Niamey. The chiefs of defence staff of the Group of Five for the Sahel member States discussed the practical arrangements for the transfer of the Joint Force headquarters from Sévaré to Bamako so that the Joint Force could achieve full operational capacity as soon as possible. As outlined in my most recent report on the Joint Force (S/2018/1006), troop deployment continued to be slowed by the absence of secure and fortified operating bases, capability and equipment. On 5 and 6 December, the Group of Five for the Sahel convened a donors' coordination conference in Nouakchott with the support of partners, including the United Nations and the European Union. The overall purpose of the conference was to raise 1.9 billion euros (€) to fund the Group's priority investment programme (2019–2021), a portfolio of 40 projects in the areas of infrastructure, governance, resilience and security. The heads of State of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and the Niger, the Minister of Defence and Veterans Affairs of Mali and representatives of several Member States, United Nations entities, regional organizations and international financial institutions attended the conference. Funding pledges amounted to €2.4 billion, exceeding the organizers' initial expectation.

III. Major security developments

22. The security situation remained of grave concern during the period under review and was marked by several complex attacks launched by violent extremist groups in the central and northern regions. The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims claimed responsibility for a number of the attacks against MINUSMA, Malian defence and security forces and international forces across central and northern Mali, particularly in the Timbuktu and Mopti regions. There was also an increase in incidents of intimidation, kidnappings and targeted assassinations of both civilians and signatory armed group members, especially in the centre of the country. Additionally, there was mounting intercommunity violence and clashes in central Mali.

A. Asymmetric and other attacks

23. MINUSMA continued to be targeted by asymmetrical attacks, most significantly in Ber, Timbuktu region, on 27 October. In the complex attack, unidentified assailants opened fire, and launched rocket-propelled grenades. Two vehicles filled with explosives entered the camp, where one of them exploded. The attack resulted in two peacekeepers killed in action and eleven injured. The modus operandi of the attack is indicative of the sustained capability of the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, which immediately claimed responsibility, to carry out complex attacks against international forces, similar to its 14 April attack on the MINUSMA Timbuktu "super camp".

24. On the same day, near Konna town, Mopti district, a MINUSMA patrol was targeted in a complex attack, when a MINUSMA vehicle struck an improvised explosive device or mine, followed by an armed confrontation with an alleged violent extremist group. The attack resulted in the wounding of six peacekeepers.

25. On 12 November, the premises of a MINUSMA contractor dealing with explosive threat mitigation training and explosive detection was attacked with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in Gao city centre. Three civilians were killed and at least 30 wounded, including 12 children and 6 women. In addition, nine contractors were injured by the explosion. The attack was claimed by the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims.

26. On the night of 22 to 23 November, Malian and Barkhane armed forces conducted an operation against the stronghold of Katiba d'Ansar Dine du Macina, resulting in the death of 30 terrorists, including the leader of the group, Hamadoun Kouffa.

27. Overall, 48 incidents involving the use of improvised explosive devices were recorded during the reporting period. The number of improvised explosive device incidents since January 2018 continued to increase, with 192 incidents having occurred, compared to 124 incidents during the same period in 2017.

28. Armed groups reportedly conducted 64 attacks, comprising 35 against Malian defence and security forces, 7 against MINUSMA, 2 against MINUSMA contractors, 16 against signatory armed groups and 1 against Operation Barkhane. The highest number of attacks was carried out in Mopti (24) and Timbuktu (13), followed by Gao (12), Kidal (7), Ménaka (4), Segou (3) and Kaye (1) regions. The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims claimed two asymmetric attacks during the reporting period. Since my most recent report, two peacekeepers were killed and 42 injured, whereas in the previous reporting period no peacekeepers were killed and 11 were injured. Three MINUSMA contractors were killed and nine injured, and 3 civilians

were killed and at least 30 others, including 12 children and six women, were injured, in Gao on 12 November.

29. Malian forces remained heavily targeted by asymmetric attacks, and the number of victims increased: 28 soldiers were killed and 47 injured during the reporting period, compared to 19 killed and 24 injured during the previous period. Attacks against the Malian security and defence forces were most heavily concentrated in Mopti (19), Timbuktu 64, Segou (3), Gao (1) and Kaye (1). Moreover, a series of clashes between signatory armed groups and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara in the Ménaka region resulted in 5 members of the signatory armed groups killed, compared to 40 members killed and 4 injured in attacks during the previous period.

B. Protection of civilians

30. Civilians continued to be affected by targeted attacks and intercommunity clashes involving armed self-defence and violent extremist armed groups in the centre, although the number of incidents decreased this reporting period. There were 109 incidents in the central region, killing 108 civilians, including one child, and injuring 43, including five children and one woman in this reporting period in comparison to 287 killed, including 14 women and 10 children, and 38 injured in the previous period. MINUSMA recorded 43 abductions of civilians. The signing of the Koro peace agreement in August, coupled with the deployment of Malian defence and security forces through the Government's integrated security plan for the centre in Dialloubé, Mopti district, Kouakourou, Djenné district, and Dioungani, Koro district, had a positive impact on the situation on the ground.

31. Some of the deadliest incidents resulting from the violence between suspected extremist elements and a group of *dozos* (traditional hunters) occurred in Ténenkou district, Mopti region, where 19 people were killed and several others injured in three incidents that occurred between 4 and 15 October in the area.

32. The limited presence of State authority in parts of central and northern Mali continued to allow violent extremist elements to expand their influence in those areas. In the Mopti region, violent extremist armed groups have been restricting access to the commune of Togueré Coumbé since mid-October and preventing the population from receiving supplies. Despite a visit by the Prime Minister to the village on 13 October, during which he committed to addressing the situation, violent extremist elements have consolidated their positions in the area and stated that they would have to be dislodged by force. Similarly, in the Gao region, the lack of State presence in many areas remained an obstacle to the establishment of a safer environment for civilians. Notably, on 29 September, suspected violent extremist elements led an incursion from the border with the Niger and killed eight civilians in Amalawlaw village and 12 in its immediate vicinity, possibly as a retaliatory response to counter-terrorist operations led by a coalition of the Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés, the Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad and Operation Barkhane along the Mali-Niger-Burkina Faso border. The attacks were also reportedly an attempt of forced recruitment of the local population. The relative calm in the Ménaka region during the rainy season came to a halt on 25 September, when alleged Idirfane armed individuals killed 27 Ibogholitane civilians and injured three, two of whom were women, in Inékar district. The number of killings in the Ménaka region almost doubled, from 23 during the previous reporting period to 41, including two children.

33. During the reporting period, improvised explosive devices killed 21 and injured 28 civilians in seven incidents. Two incidents recorded in Mopti region and one in

Ménaka region involved improvised explosive devices detonating when hit by privately owned vehicles.

34. The Prime Minister visited the Mopti region twice. On 2 October, he presided over a regional reconciliation meeting between representatives of the Dogon and Fulani communities. MINUSMA continued to assist the Ministry of Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation in its efforts to address local conflict through the operationalization of six regional reconciliation teams in the central and northern regions. MINUSMA also continued efforts to support reconciliation and to rebuild social cohesion, including the holding of a peace and reconciliation forum in Djenné town on 26 and 27 September, bringing together 220 participants, 50 of whom were women, including local government authorities, community leaders, religious leaders and members of civil society to discuss the deteriorating security situation. The forum resulted in an agreement by participants to cooperate with State authorities in order to stabilize the area. Furthermore, on 20 November, leaders of the Idourfane and Ibogolitane communities in Mali and the Niger signed an agreement to put an end to a conflict over access to natural resources. The mediation effort brought together leaders of the Fulani community, armed groups and officials from Mali and the Niger.

C. Mine action, weapons and small arms

35. With regard to weapons and ammunition management, efforts to reinforce the national capacity to secure stocks continued, with the training of 37 Malian defence and security forces as weapons and ammunition storekeepers or depot managers. MINUSMA also trained 27 Malian engineers in search activities and 9 Malian defence and security forces personnel in advanced explosive ordnance or improvised explosive device disposal, to enhance the capacity of Malian authorities to mitigate explosive hazards. An additional 12 personnel were trained as instructors in improvised explosive device threat awareness.

IV. Human rights situation

36. During the period under review, the human rights situation remained of serious concern, particularly in the centre, as well as along the border of the Timbuktu, Gao and Ménaka regions, where serious human rights violations and abuses continued to be reported. MINUSMA documented 90 cases of serious human rights violations and abuses involving at least 163 victims, including 12 women and 18 children, compared to the 129 cases and 518 victims reported during the previous period. These included 30 cases of extrajudicial execution or arbitrary killings, five cases of torture and ill-treatment and nine cases of unlawful detention. Self-defence armed groups were responsible for 34 per cent of these human rights violations and/or abuses. The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims and other similar groups were responsible for 28 per cent such violations and/or abuses, self-defence armed groups 14 per cent, signatory armed groups 14 per cent, Malian defence and security forces 14 per cent, non-signatory armed groups and the Malian State authorities 4 per cent each, and the Operational Coordination Mechanism and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel one per cent each. A total of 57 per cent of human rights violations and abuses occurred in the Mopti and Ségou regions, 19 per cent in Timbuktu, 9 per cent in Gao, 6 per cent in Ménaka, 4 per cent in the Kayes region, 3 per cent in Bamako, and 1 per cent in the Kidal and Koulikoro regions, respectively.

37. One case of human rights violations attributable to Malian members of the Joint Force was documented. On 20 October in Boulikessi, near the border with Burkina Faso, unidentified armed men attacked a Malian armed forces vehicle carrying

members of the Malian contingent of the Joint Force, killing one soldier and wounding several others. In response, Malian armed forces detained a group of 15 individuals suspected of being associated with the attack. One individual died in custody, and the remaining 14 individuals were subjected to ill treatment and torture during their detention by the Malian armed forces. The authorities have opened internal investigations on these allegations of human rights violations.

38. MINUSMA continued to support efforts of the Government in the fight against impunity. Progress was registered in the prosecution of extrajudicial executions of civilians by the Malian defence and security forces between February and June 2018 in Sokolo, Ségou region, Boulikessi and Nantaka villages, Mopti region, including the suspension of the Malian defence and security members reportedly involved in the human rights crimes, pending the finalization of the criminal investigations.

39. During the reporting period, 887 individuals testified before the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. So far, the Commission has received a total of 10,247 depositions since 3 January 2017. In my letter of 23 January 2018 (S/2018/57), I informed the Security Council of the establishment of the International Commission of Inquiry, which visited Mali from 28 October to 2 November. The three commissioners officially launched the work of the Commission through introductory meetings with representatives of the Government, signatory armed groups, victims' associations, the international community, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission and the United Nations.

40. MINUSMA delivered training courses on human rights for 620 members of the Malian defence and security forces, 244 members of civil society and 147 members of the signatory armed groups of the Operational Coordination Mechanism mixed units.

41. The country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict reported 67 grave violations against children: 11 children killed and 12 maimed in the Timbuktu, Gao and Mopti regions, 42 children separated from armed groups in the Gao and Kidal regions who are following a reintegration programme, one case of military occupation of a school in Timbuktu and one case of denial of humanitarian access.

42. From 5 to 30 November, the Government, with the support of MINUSMA and the United Nations Children's Fund, conducted child screening of combatants during the accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process. No children were identified. Activities to raise awareness on the six grave violations took place for 1,144 combatants in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu.

43. During the reporting period, there were reports of one substantiated and two alleged cases of conflict-related sexual violence committed by unidentified armed elements in Goundam district, Timbuktu region. In order to ensure a preventive approach and improved responses to conflict-related sexual violence, MINUSMA provided training to 40 Malian police officers, including 22 women, and 40 members of civil society organizations, both female and male leaders, on receiving and referring sexual violence survivors.

V. Humanitarian situation

44. The humanitarian situation remained precarious, owing to intensified armed conflict, crime and severe flooding. The 2019 humanitarian response plan estimated that these factors would affect 7.2 million people in 2019, with 3.2 million people requiring assistance compared to 4.1 million at the beginning of 2018. The plan will target the 2.3 million people most in need of humanitarian assistance. Initial planning

forecasts for 2019 decreased by 26 per cent year-on-year owing to a bumper harvest and a decrease in the number of people at risk of food insecurity. Nevertheless, the lean season of 2019 may see this figure rise to 3.4 million people. As at 3 December, 52.4 per cent of the required $329.6 million for the 2018 revised humanitarian response plan had been provided. Donors also provided $72 million in humanitarian funding outside of the plan.

45. As of December 2018, humanitarian actors had been the target of 194 security incidents, representing an increase compared to 133 incidents in all of 2017 and 63 in 2016. Insecurity and the presence of explosive devices along roads constrained humanitarian access in the northern and central regions.

46. As of December, there were 716 schools closed, as opposed to 735 in May. These closures were caused primarily by violent conflict and crime. This affected an estimated 213,800 children in the northern and central regions. About 60 per cent of the schools closed were located in the Mopti region.

47. During the reporting period, humanitarian partners provided emergency food assistance to over one million vulnerable persons in the central and northern regions.

48. Floods continued in September and, from May to September, affected 70,000 people and killed 15. This is a dramatic increase from 2017, when floods affected 11,000 people. Malian authorities and humanitarian partners assisted the most vulnerable, including through cash assistance and water, sanitation and hygiene kits.

49. As at 30 September, the Government, supported by the United Nations, registered 80,000 internally displaced people and 526,505 returning internally displaced people. It counted 68,978 refugees who had returned to Mali and 140,276 others who remained abroad. Currently, Mali hosts more than 24,418 refugees and 737 asylum seekers.

VI. Economic development

50. On 19 September, the Council of Ministers adopted the 2019 draft budget, allocating resources to the implementation of the peace agreement, reform of the armed forces and security, the operationalization of the new regions and the improvement of working conditions of state employees, among others. At the International Conference for the Economic Recovery and Development of Mali, held in 2015 in Paris, donors had pledged to provide $4.24 billion: $1.24 billion was disbursed in 2015; $0.81 billion in 2016; and $1.05 billion in 2017. The disbursement rate was estimated to reach 90 per cent in 2018. Of these funds, 40 per cent were earmarked for the north, to supplement the Malian Government's budget to implement the peace agreement. In October, the International Monetary Fund forecasted a decline in the 2018 growth rate from 5 per cent to 4.9 per cent.

51. MINUSMA, through its existing trust fund for peace and security in Mali, assigned approximately $3 million in support of the Malian defence and security forces, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the prevention and mediation of inter-community conflict projects. During the reporting period, the Peacebuilding Fund approved one new national project and two cross-border projects, for a total budget of $4.5 million. The national project focuses on the prevention of conflicts between herders and pastoralists and inclusive management of natural resources in Timbuktu and Mopti. A new cross-border project between Mali and the Niger focuses on establishing avenues for cross-border dialogue to end community conflicts that are aggravated by the actions of extremist groups. The project will further address the mistrust between local communities, the defence and security forces and the penal system. The cross-border project between Mali and Burkina Faso

supports the efforts of the Governments in the framework of the integrated strategy for the Sahel and the United Nations support plan and the priorities on cross-border programming and the empowerment of women and youth. The project engages youth as peacebuilders and development leaders through a participatory process. The project proposes to: strengthen state and non-state mechanisms and structures for conflict prevention and management; increase the participation of young people in local decision-making mechanisms and structures, with bridges to the regional and national levels; and facilitate dialogue and the sharing of experiences and good practices in promoting the civic participation of young people. These goals are promoted through a cross-border and regional approach.

VII. United Nations strategic frameworks and integration plans

52. Efforts were made by MINUSMA and the United Nations country team to strengthen strategic and operational collaboration to promote integration, including through the development of an integrated strategic framework. The framework, expected to be endorsed early next year, will set out the overall United Nations vision, joint objectives and an internal division of tasks. It is also expected to set out a gradual transition process based on the institutional capacities of the Malian Government, the capacity of the United Nations country team and improved access to conflict-affected regions for the development partners.

53. A road map containing the guiding principles for the development of the integrated strategic framework was finalized. Five thematic groups were established, focusing on the extension of state authority and related services; initiatives related to the rule of law and security; reconciliation, conflict prevention and social cohesion; support to elections; and human rights and the protection of civilians. The development of the integrated strategic framework was also discussed during a visit by my Assistant Secretaries-General for Peacekeeping Operations and for Peacebuilding Support to Mali in December.

54. MINUSMA has taken steps to adapt its footprint, as per resolution 2423 (2018). In particular, it has begun deploying additional civilian personnel to Mopti and Ménaka, while efforts are under way to generate the eleventh formed police unit, which MINUSMA intends to deploy to Sévaré, Mopti region, in early 2019 in support of the protection of civilians in the central region. In addition, as part of a United Nations-wide engagement in the centre, and in support of Malian efforts, the Mission has developed an integrated strategy for the centre, based on five pillars: political engagement; security and stabilization; mediation, social cohesion and reconciliation; human rights and protection; and strategic partnerships and communications.

VIII. Capacities of the Mission

A. Military

55. As at 13 December, 12,144 military personnel, including 40 military observers, 451 staff officers and 11,653 contingent personnel, were deployed out of an authorized 13,289 personnel, including 40 military observers, 486 staff officers and 12,763 contingent personnel. Women accounted for 3.06 per cent of military personnel.

56. From September to December 2018, 10 major operations were planned, across Mali, of company-to-battalion-sized elements, from 3 to 10 weeks in duration. These missions included reconnaissance operations and support missions for the movement of personnel and convoy security.

57. The lack of military medium-utility helicopters and contingent-owned armoured personnel carriers, including mine-protected vehicles, which remained a critical shortfall in terms of equipment, continued to limit the operational reach of MINUSMA in patrolling and providing escorts, especially in Sector North, thereby impeding mandate implementation. Key capabilities of the Force are expected to increase through the deployment between December 2018 and February 2019 of a special forces company in Timbuktu, a third company (mechanized) of the quick reaction force in Mopti, an attack helicopter unit with three helicopters in Gao, two additional combat convoy companies in Gao and Mopti, respectively, and a C-130 tactical aviation unit in Bamako.

B. Police

58. As at 30 October, 1,770 police personnel, including 324 individual police officers, of whom 16.05 per cent were women, and 1,446 formed police unit personnel, of whom 9.75 per cent were women, were deployed out of an authorized 1,920 police personnel comprising 345 individual police officers and 1,575 formed police unit personnel. While the deployment of an additional formed police unit is under way, the lack of six armoured personnel carriers for deployed formed police units remained a critical shortfall, which continued to limit the mobility of the units. MINUSMA police also require the generation of 21 individual police officers with specialized expertise, including in the fields of forensics, investigations, community-oriented policing, security sector reform, counter-terrorism, serious organized crime and drug trafficking. The expertise is essential to support the Government in addressing destabilizing crimes that are fuelling and prolonging conflicts and violence.

C. Civilian personnel

59. As at 3 December, 85 per cent of all MINUSMA civilian staff had been deployed, including 89 per cent of international staff, 73 per cent of United Nations Volunteers and 83 per cent of national staff. Women held 26 per cent of the international posts, 32 per cent of United Nations Volunteer positions and 19 per cent of national staff posts.

D. Camp construction and securing supply routes

60. The main MINUSMA supply routes to the Mission's main hubs of Bamako and Gao run through either Dakar, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, or Cotonou, Benin, to ensure delivery of goods in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

61. The Mission is currently engaged in 102 construction priority projects, which are 87 per cent complete. Ongoing projects relate to overhead protected sleeping accommodations, for which material procurement is currently under way. Other projects include an apron extension and maintenance hangar in Mopti, two hangars in Gao and another hangar in Timbuktu. The Mission will also contribute to the construction of the Kidal airstrip project, which is led by an international partner. Various security enhancement projects such as entrances, sidewall blast protection and bunkers are under way in Ménaka, Gao, Tessalit, Timbuktu, Mopti and Douentza.

E. Environment

62. On 18 October, MINUSMA completed studies to upgrade the Government's water purification facilities in Bamako and Timbuktu, which will enable them to treat additional volumes received by MINUSMA. The Mission plans on using the upgraded facilities beginning in April 2019 in Bamako and Timbuktu. On 5 November, the installation of wastewater treatment plants was completed in Mopti, Bamako, Douentza, Tessalit and Ménaka. The inspection of camps and contractor sites was conducted in the Bamako, Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao regions to ensure compliance with environmental standards. Landscaping contracts, which include tree planting, were launched as part of the "Greening the camps" initiative and to contribute to carbon sequestration.

IX. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

63. United Nations personnel continued to face threats related to armed conflict and criminality, mainly in the central and northern regions, as well as terrorism-related threats across the country. In the light of the local conflict dynamics and the expansion of violent extremist armed groups' activity in the northern and central regions of Mali, the design of security arrangements and risk mitigation measures remained challenging. In this context, road travel for United Nations personnel, including those involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, remained dangerous.

64. The terrorist attack perpetrated on 12 November against the premises of a MINUSMA contractor reaffirmed the intent of the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims to undermine the conduct of United Nations operations. The attack also represented a significant escalation in violence, while suggesting a shift in the tactics used by the group, as it ignored the risk of mass casualties among the local community.

65. The complex attack launched against the MINUSMA camp in Ber also underlined the importance of current efforts to mainstream surveillance, intelligence and monitoring measures. MINUSMA focused on strengthening command and control and communication arrangements, including by integrating closed-circuit television and public-address systems inside base defence operations centres and establishing joint defence camps procedures that associate all United Nations security actors. Base defence operations centres were completed in Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu and Mopti.

66. As part of its efforts to enhance the safety and security of its personnel, the Mission scaled up its early warning and surveillance capacity and related technological capabilities, including the installation of ground radars, counter-rocket artillery and mortar systems, and long-, medium- and short-range electro-optical system with night and day capacities. It also revised standard operating procedures for casualty evacuation, incorporating best practices and lessons learned, while decentralizing the approval procedures for evacuations during pre-planned military operations. Further, on 4 October, MINUSMA established a commercial contract with a private hospital in Niamey for the provision of level two-plus medical services in support of Kidal and Gao, where only level-two facilities exist, with Ménaka supported through Gao.

X. Conduct and discipline

67. During the reporting period, no allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded by MINUSMA. The Mission continued to deliver on the three-pronged strategy to address sexual exploitation and abuse with, in terms of prevention, 55 training sessions providing 2,000 personnel with training on standards of conduct expected from all United Nations personnel and the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse.

XI. Observations

68. Further steps were taken by the Government of Mali and the Platform coalition of armed groups and Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad to deliver on their remaining obligations under the Agreement. I commend President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita for his leadership and the Government of Prime Minister Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga for its continued mobilization in support of the Agreement, including through the creation of a dedicated Ministry for Social Cohesion, Peace and National Reconciliation tasked with coordinating the implementation of the Agreement. I was encouraged by the establishment of district-level interim administrations in northern Mali and the launch of an accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process. However, establishing lasting peace and stability will require the full and expeditious delivery of all the obligations in the Agreement, including inclusive and sustainable development. I therefore call on all parties to redouble their efforts and take further immediate and concrete action to implement key provisions of the Agreement referenced in the 22 March road map without delay to produce tangible improvements in security conditions and the implementation of sustainable development, including access to basic social services.

69. The full and timely implementation of the Agreement will require inclusive support across Malian society. I therefore welcome the emphasis of the signatory parties on an inclusive process when they endorsed the Pact for Peace signed by MINUSMA and the Government. I urge all stakeholders, including from the political opposition, to join the Government in its efforts to move forward on critical political and institutional reforms necessary for improved governance and sustaining peace. The meaningful inclusion and participation of individuals, especially women and youth, remains essential to deliver lasting results and to secure the progress made over the past years.

70. I take note of the agreement to postpone the legislative elections until next year. I call on all parties to the peace process to use this time to strengthen the transparency and credibility of the electoral process and increase participation, notably of the youth. MINUSMA and the United Nations Development Programme, through the integrated electoral team, will continue to assist national partners with the preparations of the polls.

71. The launch of the accelerated disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and integration process in the Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions is an encouraging step towards the building of a reconstituted and reformed Malian army. I call on the signatory parties to reach an agreement, without further delay, on conditions for the integration of armed group members in the Malian armed forces. These reconstituted and reformed armed forces should, over time, play a pivotal role in enhancing security across the country.

72. I remain seriously concerned about the security situation in Mali, particularly in the centre. The situation must be urgently addressed through a more integrated and comprehensive approach to avoid further deterioration. I call on the Government to

step up its efforts to address the root causes of conflict and security challenges in affected areas. Efforts are under way to scale up the presence of the United Nations in the centre, with an emphasis on reconciliation and local mediation efforts, in support of the Government's multifaceted stabilization programme.

73. I welcome the development of an integrated strategic framework, an essential tool to strengthen cooperation and pool the resources of the United Nations system to deliver a more integrated response and efficiently address the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.

74. MINUSMA continues to coordinate its activities with the Malian defence and security forces, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and Operation Barkhane, within the parameters of their distinct mandates. In this context, MINUSMA will continue to support the Malian defence and security forces, including through technical assistance and training.

75. All national and international military forces operating in Mali must ensure that their operations comply with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. No efforts should be spared to hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable. Meaningful progress in the fight against impunity remains imperative for reconciliation initiatives to thrive, reconstruct the social fabric, build trust and bring society together, and pave the way for lasting peace. The International Commission of Inquiry will complement Malian efforts to ensure the establishment of credible and functioning justice institutions in order to deliver justice and reconciliation. I urge the Government to intensify efforts to investigate and prosecute other crimes that risk destabilizing the peace process, including terrorism-related offences. I urge Member States to support the provision of police expertise to help to address destabilizing crimes.

76. I am saddened by the loss of life of peacekeepers and the injuries inflicted as a result of continued attacks. I express my heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the troop-contributing country concerned for the loss of two of its peacekeepers and to the bereaved families of the victims. The Secretariat and the Mission continue to take measures to improve the safety and security of United Nations personnel. I reiterate my call on troop- and police-contributing countries to fulfil their obligations in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed with the United Nations. It is critical that they equip their contingents with the required armoured personnel carriers, including mine-protected vehicles, to minimize the exposure of personnel to threats and enable the Mission to perform effectively. I further call on Member States to continue to support MINUSMA through the provision of bilateral support to those contributing countries which require support.

77. The deterioration of the humanitarian situation is of great concern. Access to basic services and assistance such as education, health, water and sanitation, as well as shelter remain limited and challenging. Furthermore, intercommunal conflict and organized crime continue to hinder the work of humanitarian actors, including reaching vulnerable and affected people to provide much-needed assistance. My Special Representative, in coordination with the United Nations country team, will continue to engage signatory and other armed groups in dialogue to improve humanitarian access.

78. I urge the Group of Five for the Sahel to step up their efforts to deploy outstanding troops and to fully establish the Joint Force's police component acting within the human rights compliance framework. It will be essential that the Joint Force resume its operations as soon as feasible. MINUSMA stands ready to provide support to the Joint Force within the limits of the funding it has received for this purpose. I call on the international community to support the Joint Force through more predictable and sustainable financial and logistical resources and to provide

MINUSMA with the funds it urgently requires to deliver its mandated support to the Joint Force. I also urge donors who have made pledges not yet earmarked to match them with existing needs and to accelerate the disbursement of the funds pledged. I commend the permanent secretariat and the Member States of the Group of Five for the Sahel on the successful holding of the coordination conference for partners and donors in Nouakchott on 6 December. I welcome the pledges made totalling €2.4 billion to fund the first phase of the Group's priority investment programme covering the period 2019 to 2021. The United Nations will continue to support the Group of Five for the Sahel, including by aligning its support plan for the Sahel with the priorities of the priority investment under the umbrella of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

79. Finally, I wish to commend my Special Representative, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his excellent leadership and express my appreciation to the personnel of the United Nations system in Mali for their tireless efforts in a very challenging environment. I would also like to thank the members of the international mediation, including Algeria, the lead mediator, regional and subregional organizations such as the African Union, the European Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Group of Five for the Sahel, as well as non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their continued support to Mali.

Annex

Map

MINUSMA
Deployment
December 2018
National capital
Regional capital
Town, village
Major airport
International boundary
Regional boundary
Sector line
Main road
Other road
Track
Railroad
0 100 200 300 km
0 100 200 mi
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
Map No. 4506 Rev. 26.1 UNITED NATIONS
December 2018 (Colour)
Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)
MAURITANIA
ALGERIA
MALI
NIGER
SENEGAL
GUINEA
GUINEA BISSAU
GAMBIA
BURKINA FASO
GHANA
TOGO
BENIN
NIGERIA
SIERRA LEONE
COTE D'IVOIRE
Sector WEST
Sector EAST
Sector NORTH
Sector SOUTH
Bamako
Ségou
Mopti / Sevare
Gao
Tombouctou
Kidal
Goundam
Ménaka
Gossi
Ansongo
Bourem
Anefis In-Darane
Aguelhok
Tessalit
Bordj Mokhtar
Douentza
Nampala
Niono
Djenné
Koro
Diabali
Koutiala
Sikasso
Kolondiéba
Yanfolila
Bougouni
Kati
Koulikoro
Kita
Kayes
Diéma
Nioro du Sahel
Aourou
Tambacounda
Bafoulabé
Ouagadougou
Ber
Lere
'Ayoûnel 'Atroûs

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Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report covers the period from 1 July to 31 December 2018 and provides an overview of developments and trends in West Africa and the Sahel. It also outlines the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and progress made in the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. In addition, it provides an update on the situation in the Lake Chad basin, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2349 (2017).

II. Developments and trends in West Africa and the Sahel

2. Since my last report (S/2018/649), the political situation in West Africa and the Sahel has remained stable despite significant security challenges, in particular in Burkina Faso, the Niger and Nigeria, with an increase in the cross-border activities of terrorist groups and a retreat of State authorities from peripheral zones where populations continue to live precariously. Countries of the subregion have been working together to address the complex political, security and development challenges at the root of the growing insecurity.

3. During the reporting period, a presidential election was held in Mali, regional and parliamentary elections in Mauritania and local elections in Côte d'Ivoire. The next cycle of electoral processes is causing simmering tensions across the region.

A. Political and governance trends

4. In Burkina Faso, on 30 July, the National Assembly approved the reform of the electoral code, thus paving the way for the Congres pour la democratie et le progres of former President Blaise Compaore to participate in the 2020 presidential election. The new electoral code also guarantees the right of the diaspora to vote for the first time, which would add an estimated 2.5 million potential voters to the 5.5 million existing voters.

5. In Côte d'Ivoire, on 16 July, a new political party, Rassemblement des houphouetistes pour la democratie et la paix, was established from the merger of

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several parties in the ruling coalition, and President Alassane Ouattara was appointed as its leader. On 9 August, the Parti democratique de Côte d'Ivoire opted out of the unified party, thus ending its alliance with the ruling Rassemblement des republicains. On 13 October, regional and municipal elections took place in a largely peaceful environment, despite isolated acts of violence resulting in the death of five people. The ruling coalition secured control of 117 of 201 municipalities and 19 of 31 regional councils. In the meantime, the opposition continued to call for the reform of the Independent Electoral Commission.

6. In the Gambia, efforts towards national reconciliation continued while the Government continued to be confronted by internal divisions. Disputes over land tenure and worker strikes in various public sectors heightened tensions. The cabinet reshuffle of 29 June left only the United Democratic Party and the National Reconciliation Party in the Government, effectively further splintering the ruling coalition.

7. In Guinea, political tensions persisted owing to disagreements between the Government and the opposition over the results of the local elections of 4 February. Delays and opposition concerns regarding the installation of 342 newly-elected municipal councils led to public demonstrations, many of which turned violent. Political tensions were compounded by increasing social unrest, notably a nation-wide strike by teachers launched on 3 October, and by the controversial removal of the President of the Constitutional Court following a motion of no confidence against him by the Court for alleged mismanagement. The removal was denounced by opposition leaders as being politically motivated. On 23 October, the vehicle of opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo was damaged by a projectile, leaving him unharmed, but injuring his driver.

8. The political and security situation in Liberia remained stable despite governance challenges. Controversy over the alleged disappearance of 16 billion Liberian dollars (approximately $102 million) and the launch by the Legislature of an impeachment process against Supreme Court Associate Justice Kabineh Ja'neh on allegations of misconduct, abuse of power and corruption, took centre stage in the national debate. Investigations into the allegedly missing money were launched, and peaceful demonstrations took place, while the impeachment proceedings created tensions between the Legislature and the Supreme Court.

9. Local, regional and legislative elections took place on 1 September in Mauritania. The peaceful polls were dominated by the ruling Union pour la Republique, which secured 89 of 157 seats in the National Assembly, along with all regional councils and a majority of seats in local councils. Following the elections, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz announced the formation of a new Cabinet. On 29 October, the second largest opposition group, El Wiam, announced its merger with Union pour la Republique, and its leader was elected as vice-president of the National Assembly. During the reporting period, several high-ranking officials publicly called for the President to seek a third mandate. The President repeatedly denied that he would seek a third mandate, despite the opposition accusing him of the contrary.

10. In the Niger, after almost two years of political impasse, the opposition agreed to participate in a joint technical committee, tasked with the revision of the electoral code and the re-activation of the Cadre national de dialogue politique. The 2021 presidential election dominated the political scene. President Mahamadou Issoufou stated on several occasions that he would be stepping down at the end of his mandate.

11. In Nigeria, tensions have been rising ahead of the presidential and parliamentary elections of 16 February 2019, and of the gubernatorial and state assembly elections of 2 March 2019. Concerns were raised by the reported instrumentalization of security forces in recent gubernatorial elections, the surge in alleged vote buying and the

challenges related to the ability of internally displaced persons to participate in the polls amid ongoing terrorism and violence between farmers and herders. Following the announcement in July of a split in the ruling All Progressives Congress, there have been a series of high-profile defections to the opposition People's Democratic Party.

12. In Senegal, preparations continued for the presidential election of 24 February 2019, with increasing tensions between the opposition and the Government. On 30 August 2018, an appeal court upheld the five-year jail term of a potential presidential contender, Khalifa Sall. One day later, a presidential decree relieved him of his duties as mayor of Dakar. Also, on 30 August, the Supreme Court dismissed the request for Karim Wade, the son of former President Abdoulaye Wade, to be included in the voter register, which is a prerequisite for presidential candidates.

13. In Sierra Leone, since the inauguration of President Julius Maada Bio on 12 May, the political situation has been marked by increasing distrust between his Government and the partisans of former President Ernest Bai Koroma. On 26 June, the President suspended the boards of several parastatal enterprises and independent commissions, including the Human Rights Commission, provoking national and international criticism. On 4 July, a governance transition team, established by the President in April to conduct a stock-taking exercise of the state of affairs in various ministries, departments and agencies, submitted its report to the Government. The report contained several allegations of corruption against high-ranking officials of the previous administration, prompting accusations by the opposition and some civil society organizations of witch-hunting.

14. The inter-Togolese dialogue process continued under the auspices of the co-facilitators of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo of Ghana and President Alpha Conde of Guinea. Despite concessions made by the Government of Togo and by a coalition of 14 opposition parties, limited progress has been achieved, owing to persisting disagreements over the modalities for implementing the ECOWAS road map of 14 April. During the reporting period, the ECOWAS facilitators held meetings with the Togolese stakeholders in Accra, Conakry and Lomé to assess progress and attempt to move the process forward. While both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the road map, the Government also continued to display its determination to hold a referendum on constitutional reforms, as well as local and legislative elections before the end of 2018. The opposition parties maintained their demands for the adoption of electoral reforms before the elections, boycotted preparations for the elections and, subsequently, indicated that they would not take part in the polls. The opposition parties also continued street demonstrations against what they termed one-sided reforms.

B. Security trends

15. The security situation remained volatile in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria, with repeated attacks against civilians and the military by armed non-State actors, including terrorist groups, criminal networks and community-based militia. Burkina Faso faced increased attacks by extremist groups in the east and south of the country, heightening security risks for neighbouring countries, including Benin, the Niger, and, potentially, Togo. There has also been an upswing in intercommunal violence, in particular in the Niger along its western border with Mali. Despite increased military operations, attacks by herdsmen and bandits continued to exacerbate insecurity in Nigeria against the backdrop of several large-scale attacks launched by Boko Haram on Nigerian military positions. Terrorist groups operating in the Sahel appeared to be enhancing coordination, with patterns of attacks indicating a division of labour and close cooperation among groups.

16. In Burkina Faso, 125 security incidents were registered from 1 July to 15 September, approximately double the number of incidents registered throughout the whole of 2017. Terrorist attacks resulted in more than 65 civilian and military casualties in eastern Burkina Faso over the reporting period, compared with only 4 for the whole of 2017, and involved increasingly sophisticated operations. In the face of rising insecurity, the Government conducted military operations in Loroum, Oudalan and Soum Provinces.

17. In the Niger, defence and security forces faced continuous challenges in the west and south of the country. In south-eastern Niger, Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province increased raids from across the border. There has also been a rise in kidnapping for ransom since the previous reporting period. In western Niger, militants of Islamic State in the Greater Sahara continued to use the regions of Tillaberi and Tahoua as a rear base for their operations in Burkina Faso and Mali. This resulted in isolated clashes with security forces and violence against civilians. In northern and eastern Niger, violent criminal incidents, including highway banditry and vehicle hijackings, continued.

18. In Nigeria, the operational tactics of Boko Haram appeared to be changing from targeting places of education, worship, government installations and markets, to direct attacks on military targets. An attack on a military convoy in Bama during the first week of July reportedly resulted in the death of 10 soldiers, the disappearance of 23 others and the loss of military equipment. On 15 July, heavily armed Boko Haram combatants overran the Eighty-first Division Forward Brigade in Jilli (Yobe State) killing at least 48 soldiers. On 1 September, Boko Haram killed 30 soldiers and raided the village of Zari in the north of Borno State.

19. During the reporting period, conflicts between farmers and herders resulted in loss of life, destruction of livelihoods and property, population displacements and human rights violations and abuses. Flashpoints included the cross-border axes between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, which are the main countries of origin for livestock trade. Outbreaks of violence were recorded in many States across Nigeria, albeit with more frequency in the Middle Belt region, as well as Adamawa and Taraba States in the north-east. The spike in conflict between farmers and herders is closely linked with demographic pressures; desertification and the attendant loss of grazing reserves and transhumance routes, which has been exacerbated by climate change; challenges in the implementation of effective land management and climate change adaptation policies; limited enforcement of existing pastoral laws; political and economic interests; the erosion of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms; and weapons proliferation.

20. During a joint summit of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and ECOWAS, held on 30 July in Lomé, Heads of State and Government expressed concern about the upsurge in and spread of violent conflict between herders and farmers due particularly to the adverse effects of climate change. They requested the ministers responsible for agriculture, livestock and security of the two regions to hold regular consultations, with the participation of herder and farmer organizations, in order to identify measures for the prevention and peaceful management of those conflicts.

21. Maritime crime and piracy off the coast of West Africa continued to pose a threat to peace, security and development in the region. Oil-related crimes resulted in the loss of nearly $2.8 billion in revenues last year in Nigeria, according to government figures. Between 1 January and 23 November, there were 82 reported incidents of maritime crime and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

22. Compared to the situation reflected in the previous report, there was an increase in drug trafficking throughout West Africa and the Sahel. In Benin, the Gambia and

Nigeria, more than 50 kg of cocaine were seized between July and October by joint airport interdiction task forces. During the same period, joint airport interdiction task forces seized more than 6 kg of methamphetamines, 8 kg of heroin (double the amount in the first half of 2018) and 2.6 tons of cannabis. Drug production across the region was also reportedly on the rise, with more than 100 kg of ephedrine and phenacetin seized by competent authorities.

C. Socioeconomic trends

23. The region's economic growth is projected to reach 2.9 per cent in 2019, notably owing to forecast growth of 2.1 per cent in Nigeria, accounting for 75 per cent of the region's global economic output. Côte d'Ivoire is forecast to grow by 7.6 per cent, while Ghana is expected to continue to keep its status as the fastest growing economy in West Africa, with 8.6 per cent expected growth. Levels of public debt continued to increase, with several countries at a debt-to-gross domestic product ratio of 69.8 per cent, above the 50 per cent ceiling recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

24. The Central Bank of West African States forecast an economic rebound in West Africa for 2019, except in the services and building and construction sectors. In the medium term, without a change in policies and with a favourable external environment, growth should reach 4 per cent. Challenges to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals in West Africa and the Sahel include a low level of domestic and external investment compared to other regions, continuing impediments to domestic revenue mobilization, along with the need to improve the efficiency of public spending, trade and financial integration. Furthermore, regional economic integration, including through the free movement of persons, goods and services, has been hindered by security concerns.

D. Humanitarian trends

25. The humanitarian situation in West Africa and the Sahel remains worrying, mainly owing to food insecurity and forced displacements, and is aggravated by cyclical epidemics and vulnerability to external shocks. Around 24 million people in the region require humanitarian assistance. In Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal, drought due to poor rains in 2017 decimated crops and caused acute water and pasture deficits in 2018. Food insecurity and malnutrition levels in the Sahel reached levels unseen since the food security crisis of 2012. More than 5.8 million people were in urgent need of food assistance at the peak of the lean season in July and August, and 2.1 million children still faced severe acute malnutrition as of November 2018. Humanitarian partners stepped up their response beginning in late 2017, assisting nearly half of those 5.8 million people. The World Food Programme reached 2.5 million people per month at the peak of the lean season. Favourable rains in many parts of the region since late July 2018 are expected to improve harvests and pasture. However, communities affected by the 2017 drought, having depleted their food reserves and suffered widespread livestock losses, will require sustained assistance to rebuild their livelihoods.

26. In the Lake Chad basin, insecurity and poor living conditions continued to spark population displacements. As of October, over 2.4 million people were internally displaced, up from 2.3 million in the same period in 2017, and over 230,660 Nigerian refugees were being hosted in Cameroon, Chad and the Niger. The number of those affected by food insecurity in the Lake Chad basin has risen by 1 million since the

first half of 2018, with food insecurity currently impacting a total of 5 million people, 3 million of whom are in north-east Nigeria alone.

27. A cholera epidemic in the Lake Chad basin, the worst since 2010, is declining thanks to stepped-up prevention and response efforts by communities, Governments and humanitarian partners. In Nigeria, new suspected cholera cases dropped to 742 per week in early October 2018 from nearly 3,000 cases per week in mid-September. The Niger reported 20 new cases a week in the same period, down from more than 400 cases weekly between August and September.

28. Aid organizations in the Lake Chad region delivered assistance to over 6 million people in 2018, despite many hurdles, including insecurity. Around 3,000 humanitarian workers are active in north-east Nigeria, where armed violence continues to inflict great human suffering and undermine aid operations. On 15 October, in north-east Nigeria, Islamic State West Africa Province executed a midwife working for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

29. For 2018, humanitarian organizations had requested $1.6 billion to assist conflict-affected people in the Lake Chad basin. As at 22 October, donors had provided only 46 per cent of that amount.

Human rights trends

30. The overall human rights situation in West Africa and the Sahel remains concerning. Terrorist groups continued to violate international humanitarian and human rights law, with a negative impact on the safety and security of communities. The increasing scope and intensity of clashes between farmers and herders, as well as intercommunal violence, banditry and cattle rustling, undermined the rights to life, physical integrity and property of indigenous communities, as well as the right to judicial remedy, as perpetrators continued to act with impunity.

31. During the reporting period, local and international human rights groups raised concerns over the arrest, detention and conviction of human rights defenders in some countries in the region, including Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger. There are concerns that the instrumentalization of the justice system constitutes a stumbling block to the strengthening of democratic institutions. In a positive development, three prominent Nigerien civil society actors were released after four months in detention. However, in Mauritania, a leader of the anti-slavery movement, Biram Dah Abeid, under arrest since 7 August 2018 and charged with incitement to violence, remained in detention. Although he won a seat in parliamentary elections, he has been unable to take up his seat.

32. Some progress was made in terms of national reconciliation. In the Gambia, the authorities launched the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission, following nationwide consultations on transitional justice supported by the Peacebuilding Fund. In Burkina Faso, the Haut Conseil pour la réconciliation et l'unité nationale organized meetings throughout the country to raise awareness among and consult the population on the reconciliation process, also with funding from the Peacebuilding Fund. In Liberia, there has been limited progress in the implementation of the recommendations of its Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

33. Allegations of infringements on the freedoms of assembly and expression were made by opposition, civil society, trade union and other groups in several countries, including Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria, Mauritania and Senegal. Clashes between protestors and security forces resulted in injuries and loss of life, amid concerns over the disproportionate use of force in the maintenance of law and order. In Guinea, repeated demonstrations during the reporting period resulted in several casualties. In the Gambia, two people were killed and several were

injured by the police during the violent dispersal of protesters on 28 June. In Nigeria, members of Islamic Movement in Nigeria and security forces clashed in Abuja on 27 and 29 October. According to human rights groups, at least 45 members of Islamic Movement in Nigeria were killed by Nigerian security forces (who claimed that six people had died) while another 122 sustained gunshot wounds. Security forces also reportedly arrested hundreds of Islamic Movement in Nigeria protesters.

E. Gender issues

34. During the reporting period, the representation of women in senior positions across the region remained low despite some progress. Two women were elected mayor in Banjul and Dakar, while 5 of the 11 members of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission in the Gambia were women. In Mauritania, following a government reshuffle on 30 October, 7 women were among the 23 government ministers who were appointed. Countries and regional organizations continued their efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

35. Women's rights have been systematically violated by terrorist groups, such as Ansar al-Islam in parts of northern Burkina Faso, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims in western Niger, and Boko Haram in north-east Nigeria. Reports indicate that women faced abduction, arbitrary detention, restriction on their movements, various forms of corporal punishment and sexual violence.

III. Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel

A. Good offices and special assignments of my Special Representative

36. My Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel continued to support efforts to sustain peace in the region, in collaboration with regional and international partners, by promoting and supporting inclusive national dialogues, human rights, constitutional and institutional reforms, as well as transparent, credible and peaceful elections.

37. My Special Representative visited Conakry from 8 to 10 July, where he held discussions with representatives of the Government and the opposition. He encouraged stakeholders to accelerate the implementation of the political agreement of 12 October 2016 and to seek consensual solutions to reform the Electoral Commission.

38. In his capacity as my High-level Representative for Nigeria, my Special Representative continued consultations with key national stakeholders to promote an environment conducive to peaceful general elections in 2019.

39. My Special Representative initiated and participated in a joint pre-electoral mission to Nigeria with ECOWAS and the African Union from 29 to 31 October. During the mission, he consulted with the President, the Office of the Inspector-General, senior military officials, civil society organizations and other key actors and institutions.

40. My Special Representative visited Liberia from 7 to 10 November to take stock of the progress made since the closure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia. He encouraged national authorities and civil society to work together to strengthen governance, including of the security sector.

41. On 4 December, while in Cotonou to deliver an introductory speech at the Parliamentary Assembly of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, my Special Representative engaged with government stakeholders regarding preparations for the 2019 legislative elections and ongoing political reforms in Benin.

Sustaining peace

42. From 11 to 13 July, my Special Representative undertook a joint mission to the Gambia with the President of the ECOWAS Commission, Jean-Claude Brou. Discussions focused on the follow-up to the international conference on the national development plan of 22 May, internal political dynamics, security sector reform, transitional justice, statelessness of refugee children and land governance.

43. From 15 to 19 October, my Special Representative undertook a joint mission with the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ion Jinga, and my Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, to Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and the Gambia. One theme common to all three countries was the importance of overcoming challenges to national reconciliation.

44. In Burkina Faso, interlocutors highlighted popular expectations and frustrations arising from economic decline, as well as the fragile security situation in the country. The President of the Haut Conseil pour la réconciliation et l'unité nationale, Bazomboue Leandre Bassole, emphasized the need to re-establish confidence between the population and the authorities.

45. In Côte d'Ivoire, the joint mission encouraged the Government to develop a new request for eligibility for funds from the Peacebuilding Fund for 2020.

46. In the Gambia, the joint mission participated in the launch of the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission. During meetings with the President and other government authorities, the United Nations delegation appealed for the Commission to adopt a victim-centred approach, with special attention to women, children and vulnerable groups, and to ensure the protection of victims and witnesses.

B. Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission

47. Insecurity, including mounting tensions in the English-speaking regions of Cameroon, continued to impede demarcation field operations along the Cameroon-Nigeria land boundary, thus slowing down pillar emplacement. The parties to the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission met in Lagos on 3 and 4 October to finalize logistical planning for the resumption of pillar construction. Field operations recommenced in early November for the construction of 335 pillars.

48. My Special Representative, who also serves as Chair of the Mixed Commission, continued to engage the heads of the Nigerian and Cameroonian delegations in bilateral consultations towards a resolution of outstanding areas of disagreement. A mediation team was dispatched to Abuja in July and to Yaoundé in August to follow up on the exchange of memorandums between the parties. Overall, the parties reaffirmed their commitment to implementing the judgment of the International Court of Justice of October 2002 and to fully demarcating the land and maritime boundaries shared by the two countries.

C. Enhancing subregional capacities to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security

49. During the reporting period, UNOWAS continued to reinforce its collaboration with regional partners, the African Union, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and United Nations country teams in the region. That included the deployment of technical missions to Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea and the Niger. In addition, UNOWAS continued to work closely with the Peacebuilding Support Office, with a focus on political dialogue to prevent electoral-related violence, increasing the role of women in political processes and confidence-building between local populations and the authorities. On the basis of joint consultations with UNOWAS, the Peacebuilding Fund committed $12 million for cross-border projects across the Sahel region under the framework of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel.

50. UNOWAS deployed two technical support missions to assist in the preparation of the first joint summit of ECCAS and ECOWAS on the theme "Peace, security, stability, the fight against terrorism and violent extremism", held in Lomé on 30 July. At the meeting, attended by my Special Representatives for Central Africa and for West Africa and the Sahel, the leaders of the two regions reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing cooperation to address common challenges, including terrorism and violent extremism, maritime insecurity and piracy, pastoralism-related conflict and organized crime. They also agreed to hold statutory meetings every two years.

51. From 5 to 6 September, UNOWAS hosted the annual ECOWAS-UNOWAS desk-to-desk meeting in Dakar to review ongoing political and security trends in the subregion and to plan joint initiatives for 2018 and 2019.

52. On 3 October, UNOWAS representatives met in Dakar with the Deputy Secretary-General of the Mano River Union in charge of peace and security to discuss the UNOWAS-Mano River Union strategic cooperation framework; the operationalization of the Mano River Union cross-border security strategy; capacity-building on human rights for the secretariat of the Mano River Union; and capacity-building on gender, peace and security for the Mano River Women's Peace Network.

53. On 25 October, my Special Representative participated in the ninth high-level retreat of the African Union on the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, which was held in Ghana.

54. On 3 December, UNOWAS hosted the biannual meeting of the heads of United Nations peace missions in West Africa and the Sahel, with the participation of my Special Representative for Central Africa and the United Nations Resident Coordinators for Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. Participants exchanged views on the peace and security dynamics in their respective areas of responsibility. They also agreed to continue cooperation and to strengthen information-sharing on key issues affecting the subregion.

55. In December, UNOWAS completed the first stage of an analysis of climate-related security risks in West Africa and the Sahel, their impact on populations and options for addressing them from a conflict-prevention perspective. The activity was conducted in line with the statement by the Presidential of the Security Council of 10 August 2018 (S/PRST/2018/16), in which the Security Council recognized the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel and stressed the need for long-term strategies by Governments and the United Nations to support stabilization and build resilience.

56. From 10 to 12 December, in Ouagadougou, UNOWAS and ECOWAS, in cooperation with the Government of Burkina Faso, held the first annual youth forum

for peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel. The forum discussed activities by youth organizations in the region in view of the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018) on youth, peace and security.

57. During the reporting period, UNOWAS participated in assessment missions of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) to Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. The visits were aimed at assessing the needs and capacities of Member States with respect to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001), 1624 (2005), 2178 (2014) and 2242 (2015). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) also provided technical assistance to officials from the Ministries of Justice, along with magistrates and lawyers in the region, on international standards and best practice in the prosecution and investigation of terrorism cases.

Security sector reform

58. UNOWAS continued to support security sector reform processes in the region. In Burkina Faso, the United Nations security sector reform advisory team assisted the Government in directing the security sector reform process and addressing growing security threats. The advisory team supported the Government in implementing confidence-building measures between the population and security forces. In addition, it advised the Haut Conseil pour la réconciliation et l'unité nationale on the role of security institutions in the national reconciliation process. At the request of the Government, the advisory team, with support from the United Nations Mine Action Service, is helping to assess the security sector's preparedness to address the threats posed by improvised explosive devices.

59. In Guinea, security sector reform support focused on the elaboration of national policies and capacity-building efforts for the police. The security sector reform advisory team continued to support the establishment of gender-responsive security services in nine security institutions.

60. In the Gambia, the United Nations security sector reform advisory team supported the Government in establishing the office of the national security adviser and the technical committee on security sector reform. It also supported the ongoing nationally-led process to develop a national security policy. In addition, the advisory team supported the establishment of a gender focal point network to enhance national capacity to implement gender-responsive initiatives in the security sector.

61. The above-mentioned activities were facilitated by resources from the Peacebuilding Fund.

Conflicts between herders and farmers

62. On 16 October, UNOWAS launched a study on pastoralism and security in West Africa and the Sahel, which focused on the causes of conflict between herders and farmers in the region. The study was based on close consultations with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other United Nations entities in the region, the ECOWAS Commission, the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development and independent experts. Following its publication, UNOWAS has been working closely with United Nations entities, ECOWAS and other partners to operationalize key recommendations, including the development of conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms to address competition over access to scarce water and land. ECOWAS and UNOWAS held several meetings in Abuja, from 19 to 22 November, to develop a joint workplan on transhumance, conflict analysis and the link between climate change and conflict.

The Lake Chad basin

63. During the reporting period, progress was made in the implementation of Security Council resolution 2349 (2017) to support a regional response to the crisis in the Lake Chad basin. On 30 August, Nigeria hosted a ministerial council meeting of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, at which a regional strategy was adopted to promote the stabilization, recovery and resilience of Boko Haram-affected areas of the Lake Chad basin. The meeting took place before a high-level conference on the Lake Chad region, which was held on 3 and 4 September in Berlin, and served as a platform to mobilize additional resources for the stabilization and sustainable development agenda for the subregion. My Deputy Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel attended the conference and highlighted the importance of gender as an entry point to addressing the root causes of the crisis. During the conference, partners pledged over $2 billion to help meet the needs of the more than 17 million people affected by the crisis.

64. In support of the strategy, UNOWAS and UNOCA have been engaged in a series of consultations with Benin, Cameroon, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria as follow up to the Lake Chad Basin Governors' Forum, which was held on 8 and 9 May in Maiduguri, Nigeria. In the same vein, UNODC and CTED, with the participation of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the African Union, held workshops in Niamey and Yaoundé on the role of screening and prosecution of persons associated with Boko Haram.

Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

65. During the reporting period, international support to combat maritime crime and piracy focused on bolstering the operational capacity of maritime agencies to patrol their waters and strengthening the capacity of the criminal justice chain to detect, investigate and prosecute cases of piracy and maritime crime. UNODC supported the Liberian Coast Guard in enhancing its capacity to perform regular maintenance, through the secondment of a maritime engineer and the provision of spare parts and radio equipment. Similar support was provided in Sierra Leone.

Drug trafficking and transnational organized crime

66. My Special Representative continued to mobilize support to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in close cooperation with United Nations agencies, regional partners and Governments in the region. During the reporting period, security sector stakeholders in the region benefitted from a series of training sessions organized by the United Nations, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and bilateral partners. This included training and mentoring sponsored by France on topics relating to security for the Civil Aviation Agency in the Niger, to passenger targeting for the joint airport interdiction task force in Burkina Faso, and to narcotics trafficking for the joint airport interdiction task force in Mali. In August 2018, ECOWAS and UNODC held a regional workshop in Abuja on strategies to address the illicit trafficking of tramadol and other prescription medicines, with joint airport interdiction task forces from Burkina Faso, the Niger and Nigeria. From 17 September to 8 October, joint airport interdiction task forces in West Africa took part in the INTERPOL-led "Lionfish" global joint operation, which led to the seizure of more than 55 tons of narcotics worldwide.

D. Implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel

67. During the reporting period, UNOWAS worked in close consultation with my Special Adviser for the Sahel to ensure greater integration of national and regional perspectives into the conceptual and operational frameworks for United Nations engagement in the Sahel. That has included regular consultations with ECOWAS, the African Union, the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and other regional organizations working in the Sahel, in close collaboration with other United Nations entities. A series of coordination meetings, under the framework of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, contributed to facilitating the development of joint initiatives with regional partners.

68. On 17 and 18 September in Abuja, my Special Representative, in conjunction with ECOWAS and the African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel, chaired a meeting of regional organizations operating in the Sahel, including the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the G-5 Sahel and the Liptako-Gourma Integrated Development Authority. Participants called for increased mobilization of resources from the private sector and diaspora, noting that most of the pledges made at recent donor conferences had not materialized.

69. On 12 October in Niamey, UNOWAS and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), in partnership with the African Union and the secretariat of the G-5 Sahel, supported and facilitated the official launch of the "G-5 Sahel Women's Platform". The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister of the Niger, Brigi Rafini. Participants included the Permanent Secretary of the G-5 Sahel, Ministers for Gender and Women's Affairs of the G-5 Sahel countries, government officials and civil society organizations, as well as regional and international partners. The meeting adopted a road map for the implementation of the activities of the platform.

70. On 13 October, my Special Adviser for the Sahel organized a high-level meeting on the Sahel, in the margins of a World Bank-IMF meeting in Bali, Indonesia. It was organized in partnership with the World Bank, the G-5 Sahel and the Alliance for the Sahel and was attended by Ministers of Finance from the 10 countries that are under the framework of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, as well as Ministers of Finance of the Group of 20. The meeting was part of ongoing advocacy efforts to mobilize resources for transformative initiatives for the Sahel on climate-resilient agriculture and renewable energy, which have been developed in partnership with the United Nations Sustainable Development Group. My Special Adviser continued to reinforce partnerships with Governments, regional organizations, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society to implement priority areas of the United Nations support plan for the Sahel, to strengthen synergies and to mobilize resources.

71. On 22 and 23 October, my Special Representative and my Special Adviser attended an informal meeting of Special Envoys and partners working in the Sahel that was hosted by Denmark to reinforce a collective response to the deteriorating situation in the Sahel, including through the G-5 Sahel priority investment plan and the Alliance for the Sahel. Discussions focused on the peace process in Mali and on the full operationalization of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force.

72. On 2 November in Dakar, my Special Representative chaired the seventh meeting of the steering committee for the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. The meeting brought together my Special Adviser for the Sahel, regional directors, Resident Coordinators and the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat to discuss current peace, development and security trends in the

region. Meeting participants reviewed progress made in the implementation of the United Nations support plan and discussed coordination efforts, along with the mobilization strategy for the Sahel, as well as support for the implementation of other regional plans, including the G-5 Sahel priority investment plan.

73. On 12 November, the Peacebuilding Commission held its annual session, on the theme, "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace in the Sahel region". The meeting provided an opportunity for the United Nations Secretariat, Member States and partners working on issues in the Sahel region to review progress made in supporting the countries in the region and to reflect on the implementation of the United Nations support plan for the Sahel. The Deputy Secretary-General opened the event. The meeting came on the heels of a high-level event on Mali and the Sahel, held on 26 September, in the margins of the general debate of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. Together with the President of Mali, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and other partners of the Sahel, I opened the high-level event by calling upon all parties in Mali to honour their commitments and stressing that stability in Mali is a prerequisite for peace and development in the broader Sahel.

74. UNOWAS, in partnership with other United Nations entities, supported the organization of an international donor conference to raise funds for the G-5 Sahel donors' roundtable on the priority investment plan, which took place in Nouakchott on 6 December. The conference concluded with pledges of over $2 billion to finance the priority investment plan, as well as an agreement among partners and the countries of the G-5 Sahel to establish a follow-up mechanism to ensure the timely disbursal of funds.

75. Through its liaison office in Nouakchott, UNOWAS and the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat provided support for the establishment of a G-5 Sahel threat analysis and early warning centre through the deployment of a security analyst and a human rights/governance analyst to the secretariat of the G-5 Sahel. UNOWAS, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and the United States Agency for International Development continued to support the regional cell of the G-5 Sahel for the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism. UNOWAS also facilitated the participation of members of the regional cell in several workshops with a view to developing a shared framework for analysis and building capacity with respect to the prevention of violent extremism.

76. As part of its integrated assistance on countering terrorism in the Sahel, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism organized, in conjunction with the secretariat of the G-5 Sahel, a workshop in Nouakchott from 4 to 6 September to build the capacity of G-5 Sahel security forces to prevent and manage kidnapping for ransom situations. From 6 to 8 November, the Office of Counter-Terrorism also organized, in partnership with the secretariat of the G-5 Sahel, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNOWAS, a workshop for youth groups, women's groups and other civil society organizations of G-5 Sahel countries on the role of education in the prevention of violent extremism. The Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) continued to implement a project on ensuring compliance with human rights standards at borders in the context of counter-terrorism for G-5 Sahel countries.

E. Promotion of good governance, respect for the rule of law, human rights and gender mainstreaming

77. UNOWAS, OHCHR, UNDP, UNODC, the United Nations Children's Fund, the office of my Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and UN-Women,

in collaboration with the African Union, ECOWAS, the secretariat of the G-5 Sahel and the Government of the Niger organized the second regional conference on impunity, access to justice and human rights in West Africa and the Sahel. Held from 10 to 12 September in the Niger, the conference brought together high-level officials from countries of the region. Participants adopted a declaration with recommendations on enhancing judicial cooperation and the administration of justice, in particular in the fight against violent extremism and transnational organized crime, on addressing conflict-related sexual violence, and on the role of transitional justice mechanisms in promoting national reconciliation. A ministerial platform was created to track the implementation of recommendations. UNOWAS is currently working with regional partners to identify sources of funding for the platform.

78. UNOWAS continued to provide support to civil society organizations working on human rights and rule of law issues. On 21 October, it held a panel discussion on access to justice, impunity and corruption during the meetings of non-governmental organizations that preceded the sixty-third ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, held in Banjul.

79. On 7 and 8 July, the Deputy Secretary-General conducted a joint high-level visit with representatives of the Government of Sweden and the African Union to Chad, the Niger and South Sudan to address issues relating to women, peace, security and development. The mission served as an opportunity to advocate for empowering women and girls in the Sahel, ensuring their participation in political and peace processes, and ending violence against them. On 10 July, the Deputy Secretary-General briefed the Security Council at a meeting on women, peace and security in the Sahel, during which she highlighted the need to increase support to the region, with a focus on transformative, scaled-up and integrated projects. On 3 and 4 October, UNOWAS representatives attended an ECOWAS workshop on gender inclusivity and effective mediation processes in West Africa with a view to elaborating a framework to be adopted by ECOWAS on gender and mediation.

80. UNOWAS continued to coordinate the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel. UNOWAS facilitated two subregional exchange sessions on the theme "Representativeness of women in the media", on 30 August, and on the theme "The demographic dividend in West and Central Africa", on 18 October. From 17 to 22 September, UNOWAS led a mission to Togo to hold the annual meeting of the Working Group. The meeting was attended by more than 100 women and youth representatives from 12 countries of the region, who agreed on a joint road map of activities for the next year.

81. On 26 November, in Praia, my Special Representative, together with the President Jorge Carlos Fonseca of Cabo Verde, co-chaired the ninth edition of the regional open day on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women, youth, peace and security. Participants identified policy approaches to ensure greater involvement of women and youth in decision-making processes.

IV. Observations and recommendations

82. While there were several positive developments in West Africa and the Sahel during the reporting period, increased insecurity and political instability affected a number of countries in the region.

83. There has been incremental improvement in the conduct of elections in the region. However, the pre- and post-electoral periods have often been characterized by antagonistic contestations and disputes. I call upon authorities and national

stakeholders to work together to ensure a level playing field and to create an environment conducive to the holding of peaceful, inclusive and credible elections in 2019 in Benin, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal.

84. Several countries of the Mano River basin made progress in strengthening democracy, notably through the peaceful alternation of power in Liberia and Sierra Leone and the holding of local elections in Côte d'Ivoire. Nonetheless, there is a continuing need to consolidate these hard-won but still fragile gains. In that regard, I encourage international partners to prioritize support for the Governments and peoples of Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as the secretariat of the Mano River Union, to help to consolidate peace in the Mano River basin.

85. The authorities in the Gambia are to be commended for progress made in the operationalization of its reconciliation commission. I encourage the authorities in countries throughout the region to further prioritize reconciliation as an integral part of building responsive State institutions and addressing grievances.

86. While progress had been recorded in the fight against impunity, reports of infringements of human rights, including the instrumentalization of the judicial system for political purposes and the suppression of freedom of expression, remain a source of concern. It is essential that the Governments of the region respect the independence of the judiciary, ensure equitable access to justice for all and the protection of human rights defenders, and advance security sector reform along with the adoption of legislative frameworks to address sexual and gender-based violence.

87. The continued under-representation of women in senior government positions in West Africa and the Sahel is a matter of concern. I urge Governments in the region to redouble their efforts to implement existing measures or, in their absence, to adopt new ones, in accordance with national and regional commitments, to enhance the empowerment and political inclusion of women in decision-making and leadership roles, and to promote inclusive, gender-responsive development.

88. The countries of the Sahel have undertaken notable efforts to address security challenges, in particular through the operationalization of the Multinational Joint Task Force and the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. More support is needed in this challenging task, including the establishment of predictable and sustainable funding mechanisms for those forces.

89. The growing use of military responses to the challenges facing West Africa and the Sahel is disquieting. Military solutions, while necessary, are not sufficient. A holistic approach is required to address violent extremism, with an emphasis on good governance, dialogue and mediation, sustainable development, including through the provision of basic services, and the inclusion of all segments of society, in particular women and youth, in political and peace processes.

90. I am deeply concerned by the growing sophistication in the organizational capacities and reach of violent extremist groups in parts of the Sahel and Lake Chad basin. The rising number of attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria demonstrate the potential of such groups to strike across the region, destroy the social fabric of communities and deprive populations of their most basic rights. I call upon Member States to intensify their efforts to address the root causes of the phenomenon in order to reverse that trend.

91. Allegations of human rights violations by security forces across the region are a cause for concern. Counter-insurgency efforts and security operations must be carried out in full compliance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee laws.

92. The lack of humanitarian access, notably in the Lake Chad basin, as well as in the Liptako-Gourma region, is resulting in unnecessary human suffering. The parties concerned must respect the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality and allow the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in need, especially children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups.

93. The humanitarian response plan for the Lake Chad basin for 2019 is critically under-funded. I encourage international partners to contribute generously to the plan to help address the needs of the most vulnerable.

94. The impact of climate change on conflict dynamics in the Lake Chad basin and parts of the Sahel is serious. An adequate response will require national, regional and international partners to develop a regional framework, in line with the United Nations support plan for the Sahel, to proactively respond to the current and projected threats posed by climate change.

95. The recent adoption of a regional stabilization strategy for countries affected by the Boko Haram crisis and the support of the international community in that regard is an encouraging development. I call upon partners to ensure a rapid response and that all engagements are adapted to specific contexts in close collaboration with the affected Governments.

96. The Governments of Cameroon and Nigeria have commendably committed to completing the demarcation of their shared land and maritime boundaries. I encourage them to renew efforts to resolve any residual differences with respect to the judgment of the International Court of Justice of 10 October 2002, with a view to accelerating the completion of the mandate of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission.

97. I commend the efforts of the United Nations system based in Dakar and my Special Adviser for the Sahel, Ibrahim Thiaw, towards fostering the implementation of the United Nations support plan for the Sahel. It will be important for the United Nations and external partners to continue to work closely with Member States and regional organizations to accelerate progress in that regard.

98. The current mandate of UNOWAS will end on 31 December 2019, while my reform proposals, as approved by the General Assembly, will enter into force on 1 January 2019. Meanwhile, since the merger of the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel and the United Nations Office for West Africa into UNOWAS in January 2016, there have been significant political and institutional changes in the region. Therefore, the Secretariat will undertake a strategic review of UNOWAS in 2019, with a view to enhancing the Mission's capacity to carry out its mandate.

99. I wish to express my appreciation to the Governments of West Africa and the Sahel region, the African Union, ECOWAS, the G-5 Sahel, the Mano River Union, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Lake Chad Basin Commission for their continued cooperation with UNOWAS. I also extend my appreciation to the United Nations system in West Africa and the Sahel, civil society organizations and other institutions for their close partnership with UNOWAS. I commend and further encourage the close collaboration between UNOCA and UNOWAS on an increasing range of topical and transversal challenges, which reflects and responds proactively to the enhanced cooperation between ECCAS and ECOWAS. I would like to express particular appreciation to my Special Representative, as well as the staff of UNOWAS and the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, for their continuing efforts to advance peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel.

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Security Council

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Letter dated 28 December 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, containing an account of the Committee's activities from 1 January to 31 December 2018. The report, which was approved by the Committee, is being submitted in accordance with the note by the President of the Security Council of 29 March 1995 (S/1995/234).

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Olof **Skoog**
Chair
Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya

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Report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya

I. Introduction

1. The present report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2018.

2. The Bureau of the Committee consisted of Olof Skoog (Sweden) as Chair and the representative of the Netherlands as Vice-Chair.

II. Background

3. By its resolution 1970 (2011), the Security Council established the Committee and imposed a two-way arms embargo on Libya, as well as a travel ban and an asset freeze on designated individuals and entities, and outlined exemptions to those measures. The Committee is tasked with, among other things, overseeing the implementation of the sanctions measures. By its resolution 1973 (2011), the Council established a panel of experts to assist the Committee in carrying out its mandate and imposed additional measures relating to Libya, including the authorization to protect civilians, the establishment of a no-fly zone and a ban on flights of Libyan aircraft, in addition to authorizing inspections, including on the high seas, in relation to the arms embargo. In both resolutions, the Council outlined criteria for designation under the travel ban and asset freeze measures and listed specific individuals and/or entities as subject to those measures. Subsequently, in its resolutions 2009 (2011), 2016 (2011), 2040 (2012) and 2095 (2013), the Council terminated or eased some of the measures and introduced further exemptions thereto, delisted two entities and terminated the authorization for inspections, including on the high seas.

4. By its resolution 2146 (2014), the Security Council decided to impose measures, such as prohibitions on loading, transporting or discharging crude oil, entering ports, bunkering services or other servicing, and financial transactions, in relation to designated vessels attempting to export crude oil illicitly from Libya. Exemptions to the measures were also included. Subsequently, in its resolution 2362 (2017) the Council decided to extend the measures making them applicable to vessels loading, transporting or discharging petroleum, including crude oil and refined petroleum products, illicitly exported or attempted to be exported from Libya. By its resolution 2174 (2014), the Council reinforced the arms embargo and expanded the designation criteria, which it further elaborated in its resolutions 2213 (2015), 2362 (2017) and 2441 (2018).

5. Provisions for Member States to inspect, in their territory, cargo to and from Libya and designated vessels on the high seas were included in the sanctions regime in the context of the enforcement of the arms embargo and of the measures aimed at preventing the illicit export of petroleum from Libya. By its resolution 2292 (2016), the Council also authorized for 12 months inspections on the high seas off the coast of Libya of vessels believed to be carrying arms or related materiel to or from Libya in violation of the arms embargo, provided that good-faith efforts were made to first obtain the consent of a vessel's flag State. Such authorization was renewed in resolutions 2357 (2017) and 2420 (2018) for additional, successive periods of 12 months. By its resolution 2441 (2018), the Security Council extended for a further

15 months the authorizations and measures set out in resolution 2146 (2014) and previously extended in resolution 2362 (2017).

6. The membership of the Panel of Experts on Libya initially consisted of eight experts, was then reduced to five experts under resolution 2040 (2012) and then again was increased to six experts under resolution 2146 (2014). The Panel's mandate was most recently renewed in resolution 2441 (2018).

7. Further background information on the Libya sanctions regime can be found in the previous annual reports of the Committee.

III. Summary of the activities of the Committee

8. The Committee met four times in informal consultations, on 9 February, 3 April, 25 May and 23 August, in addition to conducting its work through written procedures.

9. During the informal consultations held on 9 February, the Committee heard a presentation by the Panel of Experts on its interim report, prepared in accordance with resolution 2362 (2017), and discussed the recommendations contained therein.

10. During the informal consultations held on 3 April, the Committee discussed the issue of leaks to the media of confidential information and heard briefings by the Secretariat and the Panel of Experts. It also discussed reports of alleged devaluation and losses related to the assets freeze imposed pursuant to Security Council resolutions.

11. During the informal consultations held on 25 May, the Committee discussed a proposal for designation of additional individuals as subject to the assets freeze and travel ban measures. Libya also participated in that meeting.

12. During the informal consultations held on 23 August, the Committee heard a presentation by the Panel of Experts on its final report under resolution 2362 (2017) and discussed the recommendations contained therein.

13. Following the informal consultations held on 9 February and 23 August, and in accordance with paragraph 104 of the annex to the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507), the Committee issued press releases containing brief summaries of the meetings.

14. On 1 and 2 November, the Chair of the Committee led a Committee visit to Libya, the first such visit since the inception in 2011 of the sanctions regime. While the approved terms of reference had indicated Tripoli and Beida as the two destinations to be visited, the Committee only visited Tripoli in November, owing to the closure of Beida Airport. The Chair intends to visit all areas agreed in the terms of reference as soon as possible subject to logistical and security arrangements.

15. The Committee adopted two implementation assistance notices to provide guidance to Member States on the application of the provisions of the resolutions regarding the assets freeze in relation to the payment of management fees on frozen assets and on the payment of interest and other earnings on frozen assets, on 4 December and 17 December, respectively.

16. On 17 January, 21 March, 21 May, 16 July and 5 September, the Chair of the Committee briefed the Security Council on the activities of the Committee, pursuant to paragraph 24 (e) of resolution 1970 (2011) (see S/PV.8159, S/PV.8211, S/PV.8273, S/PV.8312, and S/PV.8341).

17. The Committee received two implementation reports from two Member States. The Committee responded to three requests for guidance relating to the arms embargo and the asset freeze.

18. The Committee sent 66 communications to 17 Member States and other stakeholders with reference to the implementation of the sanctions measures.

IV. Exemptions

19. Exemptions to the arms embargo are contained in paragraph 8 of resolution 2174 (2014), which supersedes the exemption contained in paragraph 13 (a) of resolution 2009 (2011) as modified by paragraph 10 of resolution 2095 (2013); paragraph 13 (b) of resolution 2009 (2011); and paragraph 9 (c) of resolution 1970 (2011).

20. Exemptions to the asset freeze are contained in paragraphs 19 to 21 of resolution 1970 (2011) and paragraph 16 of resolution 2009 (2011).

21. Exemptions to the travel ban are contained in paragraph 16 of resolution 1970 (2011).

22. Exemptions to the measures in relation to attempts to illicitly export petroleum, including crude oil and refined petroleum products, from Libya are contained in paragraphs 10 (c) and 12 of resolution 2146 (2014).

23. The Committee approved three arms embargo exemption requests invoking paragraph 9 (c) of resolution 1970 (2011). The Committee received seven asset freeze notifications invoking paragraph 19 (a) of resolution 1970 (2011), on which it took no negative decision. The Committee granted a travel ban exemption request invoking paragraph 16 (a) of resolution 1970 (2011) and approved an extension to that request. The Committee also twice approved an extension to a previously granted travel ban exemption request. The Committee did not approve three delisting requests from two listed individuals to no longer be subject to the travel ban measure pursuant to paragraph 15 of resolution 1970 (2011).

V. Sanctions list

24. The criteria for the designation of individuals and entities as subject to the travel ban and asset freeze are set out in paragraph 22 of resolution 1970 (2011), paragraph 23 of resolution 1973 (2011), paragraph 11 of resolution 2146 (2014), paragraph 4 of resolution 2174 (2014), paragraph 11 of resolution 2213 (2015), paragraph 11 of resolution 2362 (2017) and paragraph 11 of resolution 2441 (2018). The procedures for requesting listing and delisting are described in the Committee's guidelines for the conduct of its work.

25. The Committee listed six individuals on 7 June, one individual on 11 September and one individual on 16 November as subject to the travel ban and assets freeze. On 17 September, the Committee enacted amendments to the entries concerning five individuals listed on the sanctions list. On 18 April and 7 June 2018, the Committee allowed the listings of two vessels to expire.

26. As at the end of the reporting period, there were 28 individuals and two entities on the sanctions list of the Committee.

VI. Panel of Experts

27. On 2 August, in accordance with paragraph 14 of resolution 2362 (2017), the Panel of Experts provided its final report to the Committee (S/2018/812), which was transmitted to the Security Council on 5 September and issued as a document of the Council.

28. On 27 December, following the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2441 (2018) on 5 November, the Committee approved the proposed six individuals to serve on the Panel with expertise in arms (two experts), finance, armed groups, armed groups/regional matters and maritime/transport matters. The mandate of the Panel expires on 15 February 2020.

29. The Panel conducted visits to Belgium, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, the Niger, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. In Libya, members of the Panel undertook visits to Tripoli and Misrata.

30. In pursuance of its mandate, the Panel, through the Secretariat, sent 176 letters to Member States, the Security Council, the Committee and international and national entities.

VII. Secretariat administrative and substantive support

31. The Security Council Affairs Division provided substantive and procedural support to the Chair and the members of the Committee. Advisory support was also provided to Member States to promote understanding of the sanctions regimes and facilitate the implementation of the sanctions measures. Induction briefings were also provided to incoming members of the Council to familiarize themselves with the specific issues relevant to the sanctions regime. The Division supported the visit of the Chair and members of the Committee to Libya on 1 and 2 November.

32. To support the Committee in its recruitment of well-qualified experts to serve on sanctions monitoring groups, teams and panels, a note verbale was sent to all Member States on 5 December to request the nomination of qualified candidates for membership of the roster of experts. In addition, a note verbale was sent to all Member States on 9 July notifying them of upcoming vacancies on the Panel of Experts and providing information on recruitment timelines, areas of expertise and pertinent requirements.

33. The Division continued to provide support to the Panel of Experts, by conducting an induction for newly appointed members and assisting in the preparation of the Panel's interim report submitted in January and its final report submitted in May. In August, the Secretariat circulated an updated handbook for sanctions experts, which contained information to facilitate their work and to answer frequently asked questions that may arise during their term. The information is based on relevant United Nations rules and regulations as well as practices and procedures established by the Secretariat.

34. The Secretariat continued to update and maintain the Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List and the committee-specific sanctions lists in the six official languages and the three technical formats. Furthermore, the Secretariat implemented improvements concerning the effective utilization of and access to sanctions lists, as well as the further development in all official languages of the data model approved in 2011 by the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh),

Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, as requested by the Council in paragraph 54 of resolution 2368 (2017).

35. Pursuant to paragraph 2 of resolution 2357 (2017), the Secretary-General submitted his report on the implementation of resolution 2357 (2017) on 11 May 2018 (S/2018/451).